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ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE BOOKS QUOTED IN THIS VOLUME.

Alberoni. Histoire du Cardinal Alberoni.

Istoria del Cardinal' Alberoni, seconda Edizione. Con aggiunta de' manifesti pubblicati da sua Eminenza. Amsterdam, 1720.

The former of these works contains only a part of the life of Alberoni, said to be written by Rousset. The latter is a translation into Italian of Rousset's work, with a continuation of the life to the final retreat of Alberoni; and the valuable addition of four letters, addressed by him to Cardinal Paolucci, from Sestri, in reply to the accusations brought against him.

Berwick. Mémoires de Berwick, 2 vols. 12mo.

The greater part of these Memoirs was written by Marshal Berwick himself; they are chiefly military, but contain some valuable political facts.

Bolingbroke. Letter to Sir W. Wyndham.

One of the best written works in the English language.

——— *Correspondence,* 4 vols. 8vo.

Very valuable for the history of the Treaty of Utrecht.

Caylus, Souvenirs de Madame de

A very entertaining fragment written by the lively niece of Madame de Maintenon.

Choisy. Mémoires de.

Choisy has been justly praised by Anquetil for the manner in which he collected the anecdotes he relates. Voltaire questions his accuracy, but on no solid grounds.

Dangeau. Extraits du Journal du Marquis de Dangeau.

There are two works to which this description applies; the one published in two volumes 8vo., by Madame de Genlis, the other in one volume 8vo., by M. Lémontey, accompanied by an excellent essay on the reign of Lewis XIV. The work itself is full of little details of the daily proceedings of the court. It is manifest, that the sole value of a work of this sort consists in the fidelity with which it is reported; yet Madame de Genlis has ventured to corrupt the text in several places. In one instance, where Dangeau says, that the Dauphine ordered back one of her attendants who had fled to a convent for the purpose of becoming a nun, Madame de Genlis adds, " knowing that she took the step from ill humour, and not from a call." In another place she alters the words of Lewis XIV. himself, to make them more edifying.

D'Orléans. Vie de Philippe D'Orléans, by M. de la Hode.

A book of some merit.

D'Orléans. Extraits de la Correspondence allemande de Madame, Mère du Régent.

This is a book of the highest authority. Madame writes to her correspondents without reserve or delicacy on all the persons of that profligate age. In this instance likewise, a new edition, published last year, shews that former editors had softened passages which they thought too plain and harsh.

Dubois. Vie privée du Cardinal Dubois.

Professes to be written by one of his secretaries who was not

sufficiently paid for his services. The spirit of the work is malignantly hostile to Dubois, but reveals little that was not notorious to the whole world.

Dubois. Mémoires Secrets du Cardinal Dubois.

The official papers of the time, published from the collection of M. de Rayneval. The correspondence with Rome relative to the *hat* of Dubois is very curious.

Duclos. Mémoires Secrets sur les Règnes de Louis XIV. et Louis XV.

Duclos was historiographer of France towards the end of the reign of Lewis XV. and had access to the best sources of information. He did not publish his work during his life-time, and therefore speaks without fear and without favour. He is somewhat too fond of anecdotes however, and scarcely rejects any which have been current in the best society of his time. He is therefore an useful and agreeable, but not an infallible guide.

Gourville. Mémoires de Gourville.

Contain many curious circumstances, on the authority of a man of sense, who had good means of information.

Louis XIV. Œuvres de.

The best edition of this work is in six volumes, 8vo. It consists of several parts. One part, but the least important, was placed in the King's library at Paris by the Maréchal Duc de Noailles, to whom it had been given by Lewis XIV. himself. Another portion was given by Lewis XVI. to General Grimoard, the editor of a part of the work. Another was given by the Abbé Sallier, Librarian of the King's library, to the editor of the Œuvres Mêlées of Pelisson.

With respect to the Memoirs, it seems to be agreed, that they are

in the hand-writing of Pelisson, who was employed by the King in 1672, as his historiographer.

In page 15 of the copy deposited by the Duke of Noailles, is the following note, "Le roi a mieux mis cet endroit; je n'ai pu bien retenir les termes précis, et puis avoir oublié d'autres choses ailleurs." It would appear from this note, that Pelisson wrote from the King's dictation, and put this note in the copy delivered to the King for his perusal and approbation. In the other copies it is not found. Another note leads to the same conclusion: the text says, "quelles places j'ai achetées." The note of Pelisson, "Je ne sais s'il y a plusieurs places achetées." At the end of the Memoirs for the year 1661, Pelisson says in a very long note,

"J'ai remis ici le travail d'autrefois, retouché sur ce que j'ai vu depuis. Il seroit bon que S. M. le lût, comme tout le reste, avec le crayon que j'attache, pour marquer ce qui ne lui plaira pas."

"Tout ce qui est ici renfermé avec des crochets ou guillemets," est ce qui j'ai cru pouvoir suppléer ou de faits ou de réflexions.*

Le reste qui n'est point marqué n'est pas de moi pour la matière, quoique je puisse avoir resserré ou étendu, changé le tour ou l'expression, suivant la liberté qui m'a été donnée.

J'ai copié de mot à mot ce qui est des finances.

Le Roi aura la bonté, s'il lui plaît, de me dire s'il y a trop ou trop peu de réflexions et de conseils pour son dessein: ce que j'ai vu m'a persuadé qu'il en falloit mettre. Des princes qui ont écrit pour leurs enfans, les uns n'ont laissé que des préceptes, sans histoire, ce qui est moins agréable; les autres que l'histoire sans préceptes, ce qui est moins utile: la perfection est peut-être à joindre les deux. J'ai insisté sur la nécessité de l'application, dont il semble que Monseigneur a plus de besoin; mais au fond ce n'est qu'une ébauche, qu'on achèvera quand on aura conçu tout-à-fait l'intention de S. M. quoiqu'il n'y ait personne sans exception qui ne doive trembler quand il écrit pour elle."

This passage is very equivocal; from the beginning it would seem that all was the King's; and from the end, that the reflections at

* Ces passages sont en petit nombre et courts, à l'exception de tout le détail sur l'affaire de Vatteville, et sur la réparation faite au nom du roi d'Espagne.

least were chiefly Pelisson's. It will perhaps be safe to conclude, that the King dictated from notes (of which many are still remaining) the history of the year; that Pelisson wrote from what he had heard, adding many of the reflections, and nearly all the form.

Another point to be considered is, at what time these Memoirs were composed. Now, at the end of the first manuscript, p. 100, of the printed edition, he says, many of his ancestors have waited till the end of their lives before they gave exhortations of this kind to their children, but that he writes "lorsque la vigueur de mon age, la liberté de mon esprit, et l'état florissant de mes affaires ne vous permettroient point d'y soupçonner de déguisement ou de les attribuer à la vue du péril." Speaking of the employment of his time in 1666, he says, "quand après cela, j'avois quelques momens de reste, je les employois aux Mémoires que vous lisez maintenant."* Here then we have the beginning of the Memoirs; but their completion in their present form seems to have taken place long afterwards; for in the year 1661, speaking of the belief of his taking a prime minister, he says, "Le temps a fait voir ce qu'il en falloit croire, et c'est ici la dixième année que je marche."†

After this decisive passage, it is curious to see the editor wondering why Rhulhieres fixed on the year 1670 as the year of the composition of the Memoirs.

These dates enable us to add to our estimate of the value of the Memoirs. We see that they were not drawn up in haste, and given away without revision. They were the early employment of the King in his leisure moments in the year 1666. Pelisson says, in a letter to Louis XIV. in 1671, that the King had drawn him from a state of misfortune and disgrace nine months before."‡ It was soon after this, probably, he was entrusted with the Memoirs. They thus come to us, adorned indeed by the reflections of a stranger, but approved and weighed by Louis XIV. with the most

* Mém. vol. ii. p. 64. † Vol. i. p. 37. ‡ Avert. p. 21.

scrupulous care. It is probable that he left to his grandson and successor more perfect copies, one of which Louis put into the hands of General Grimoard. There are some corrections in the hand of Louis in the last copy, which shew that he adopted them. In speaking of the plan of giving the crown of Poland, the MS. says, that what touched him the most was, that it was an opportunity which seldom occurs of making a present of a crown; and Louis adds, " et de l'assurer à la France." In the next page are two other corrections in his own hand-writing.*

Upon the whole then we may conclude, that although these Memoirs are, as M. Flassan observes, neither in the hand-writing nor in the style of Louis, they are nevertheless composed from notes of his dictation, and contain sentiments which he either suggested, or was willing to adopt as his own.

Louville, Mémoires de.

Louville was employed in Spain more than once; his dispatches are extremely curious, and give an interesting view of the state of Spain at that time.

Maintenon.

The best edition of the Letters of Madame de Maintenon is in three volumes, small octavo. Here again I have to observe, that former editors had taken the liberty of altering the style of Madame de Maintenon. Really this unfaithfulness is inexcusable.

Noailles. Mémoires du Maréchal Duc de Noailles.

These Memoirs are compiled from despatches and other writings of the Duke of Noailles by the Abbé Millot. They contain much authentic information.

* Mém. t. ii. p. 268-269.

Régence. Mémoires de la

This work contains many of the official papers of the period of which it treats. In other respects it is not of the least value.

St. Simon. Œuvres de

No one will deny that it is impossible to write more entertaining works than those of the Duke of St. Simon. Some, however, have questioned their accuracy. In my opinion, St. Simon was too religious and too honest a man, indeed too much of a gentleman, to relate that which he knew to be false; what he saw therefore he relates faithfully; his hearsay evidence must not be admitted without great caution. The best edition of St. Simon is in 13 volumes, printed in 1791, with the date of Strasburgh.

Swift.

The works of Swift, especially the Diary, are of the greatest possible assistance towards forming an estimate of Queen Anne and her ministry.

Many other works which I have consulted are either so well known, or so little worth knowing, that it were needless to describe them. Among the former I have been exceedingly indebted to the various compilations of Archdeacon Coxe. Among the latter may be reckoned a posthumous work of Marmontel on the Regency, which has little more foundation in truth than many of his Contes Moraux.

Of Manuscripts I have consulted only one, a narrative of the rebellion in Scotland, in 1715, by one of the principal persons engaged. I am indebted for the perusal of it to the kindness of the Earl of Rosslyn.

INTRODUCTION.

THE communities of modern Europe are distinguished from those of ancient times by many broad and conspicuous marks. Among these there is none more remarkable, or which more forcibly arrests the attention of the historian, than the difference of the mode in which the characters of ancient and modern nations have been formed. Ancient cities falling at once into political society, and requiring forms of government to hold them together, were obliged to appoint some one person, or some body of persons, to frame regulations for the conduct of general affairs, and the maintenance of order. These early legislators finding themselves thus called upon to prescribe the institutions of an infant state, extended their directions to every thing which might influence the well being of the commonwealth: manners, dress, food, amusements, became an object of public care for punishment or reward. The members of these communities thus became attached to the peculiar customs of their city; and when attacked by a foreign enemy they defended themselves with the more vigour and perseverance, as conquest implied the loss not only of liberty, but of all the habits of their lives endeared to them by long prescription and legislative sanction. Of the same nature are the institutions of those countries

where religion and government walking hand in hand have laid down rules for every part of life, for eating, drinking, washing, sleeping; such as the Mahometan nations, the Hindus, and the Chinese.

Character of the ancient Germans.

The people of modern Europe have been cast in a different mould. Consisting originally of the wild inhabitants of woods, the bond of society held them but loosely together, and they ranged over the forest as unfettered in their actions as the streams that ran from their mountains, here breaking into a torrent, and there swelling to an inundation. They are described by one of the greatest historians of antiquity as fond of idleness, but hating peace: eager for war wheresoever it was to be found, and engaging willingly in the quarrels of their neighbours: following as leaders those who displayed the most valour, and choosing as kings those who could boast the most illustrious descent: meeting frequently to consult on the interests of their tribe; leaving the decision of minor concerns to their chiefs, and reserving the discussion of the greater for the deliberation of all: paying peculiar honour to their women, for whom they willingly risked their lives: regarding with superstitious reverence the admonitions of their priests; and worshipping their gods in groves beneath no other canopy but that of heaven, and with no other temples than those which nature had formed.*

It was one of the consequences of the slight texture of the frame by which the German people were held together, that few attributes belonged to the supreme power. Their laws, if laws they might be called, were adopted with the view of

* Tacitus de Moribus Germanorum, passim.

preserving a warlike tribe from destruction, and nothing more. They punished their members for scarcely any crime but treason, (or rather treachery) and cowardice: murder and robbery, the fruitful heads of our criminal legislation, had no place in their penal code. In their estimation nothing seems to have been considered a crime that did not immediately endanger the whole community; and they were not yet prepared to argue, that he who aims at the life or property of one man injures the peace and security of all. Incapable even of this simple refinement, they left every one to pursue his own quarrel and revenge the wrong he had suffered. Some time later a pecuniary mulct was imposed upon murder; but still the nobler way was that of private war, and the man of generous soul trusted to his own sword to wash away the injury that had been done to himself or his kindred in the blood of his enemy.

Chivalry.

Hence arose the law of honour and the age of chivalry. In the absence of courts of justice and the weakness of government, the brave devoted themselves to the protection of the oppressed and the defence of the weaker sex. When a lady was in danger it was permitted to a knight even to fight against his country; the feelings were exalted by the employment of valour in behalf of innocence, helplessness, and beauty; and those who had enlisted themselves in so romantic a cause, soon learnt to respect each other, and to behave to their most bitter enemies in a barbarous age with all the courtesy practised in the most polished times, and in the most amicable relations of life.

Much of this strange mixture of ferocious cruelty with refined gallantry, is undoubtedly to be attributed to the

intercourse of the Christians with the Moors and the Arabs: in the wars of Spain and the Crusades were learnt those refinements with which an eastern imagination had adorned the exercise of brute force and animal courage. But, be its origin what it might, the spirit of chivalry produced a system of manners totally distinct from the government, and forming as it were a separate code which the laws of the state had not created and could not suppress. The member of an ancient state could hear himself grossly abused by his fellow-citizen, without any obligation to retaliate, otherwise than by words: the noble or knight of Germany or France was compelled either to draw his sword against his accuser, or to lose his character in society. No form of law, no species of tribunal could dispense with the necessity of revenge; and from the Bay of Naples to the Mountains of Inverness, he who had been wronged by word or deed, thought himself bound to seek satisfaction in the blood of his adversary. In Italy and in Scotland, the death of the aggressor procured by any means was considered a lawful atonement; and so far was this principle extended, that not many years have elapsed since a judge was slain at Edinburgh by the party against whom he had pronounced a legal decision. In other parts of Europe the practice of single combat was usual, honourable, nay almost indispensable; and there can be no better proof of the supremacy of opinion over law, than the fact that Lewis the XIVth, who affixed the most severe penalties to the offence of fighting a duel, would allow no man in his own regiment to refuse a challenge.

Nobility. The maintenance of a code of manners distinct from that created by the law, was much promoted by the existence of

a separate class of nobility. It is not my purpose to enter into the subject of the feudal governments, which has been lately so well developed; but a few words may be allowed on the nobility of Europe. They formed in every country but England, a class totally distinct from the rest of the community; possessed of the fortresses and the lands of the country, the king was their subject and the people were their slaves; cherishing the notion of their own superiority in power, in valour, and in honour, they treated with the proudest contempt the laws and the judges who pretended to controul their actions. Failing as they did in their attempts to establish permanently aristocratical governments, in which the King, like the Doge of Venice, should be a cypher; they retained sufficient influence to preserve their customs untouched, and to form the manners, if not the laws of their country. Henry the IVth of France, whose object it was to depress their power, paid a flattering homage to their prejudices, when he said, that he was but the first gentleman of his kingdom; and the modern kings of Spain, although they had totally deprived their nobles of political authority, were obliged to consult their formal privileges in the business of daily life. It was a fixed opinion with the European nobility, that their families were disgraced by an alliance with plebeian blood; and hence they remained in the old absolute monarchies up to our own days, a separate and favoured race, possessing the monopoly of the offices of the court so much the more because they were shut out from the deliberations of the cabinet.

Another particular in which Modern Europe has differed greatly from ancient states, and from the rest of the world is, Women.

in the station assigned to women. The character of the gothic nations, the introduction of christianity, the institutions of chivalry, the poetry which accompanied them, and lastly, when the influence of nearly all these abated, the forms of modern society have combined, happily for the world, to give women a rank which they never held before.

Of Slavery.

Another particular in which modern states differ most essentially from ancient commonwealths, is the abolition of personal slavery. This great act ought, I think, to be counted as one of the effects of christianity. Many other causes doubtless contributed to this result, but the emancipation of the people would hardly have been so uniform, had not some great prevailing cause influenced the conduct of the princes and nobility of Europe. This cause was the opinion that it was wrong for a Christian to keep a Christian in slavery. Alfred, King of England, orders in the 11th section of his laws, that if any person buy a Christian servant he shall serve six years, but in the seventh he shall be manumitted. Sir Thomas Smith informs us, that the clergy never ceased preaching against the sin of retaining Christians in slavery. In 1067, Pope Alexander the III. declared in the name of a council, "that all Christians ought to be exempt from servitude."* Political events hastened the emancipation of the slaves; the cities made all their inhabitants free in order to increase their strength against the barons; and the barons gave freedom to their vassals that they might not be tempted to take refuge in the towns.

From these and other causes, personal slavery seems to have been nearly extinct in England, France, Italy, and Spain,

* Voltaire. Essai sur les Mœurs, c. 83.

in the middle of the 15th century. The historian Philippe de Comines, when he asserts, that he has known Christians retain their brethren in slavery, is obliged to have recourse to Greece for an example.

It is a singular fact in the history of opinions, that the belief of the injustice of slavery was confined to the case when the slave was a Christian. The practice of carrying off negroes from the coast of Africa was commenced by the Portuguese at the very period when the slavery of Christians was nearly abolished in Europe.

When personal slavery was extinct, the servitude of the peasantry attached to the soil became more nominal than real; it only obliged them to the payment of a quit-rent under the name of a tribute, and in process of time the soil rather belonged to them than they to the soil.

The absence of slavery has made a difference between ancient and modern states, of which it would be difficult at one view to estimate all the consequences. Every one who has a pulse in his heart for the happiness of mankind must rejoice, that in almost all the nations of modern Europe, man is not accustomed to believe that he can have a property in man; and that freedom from personal slavery is the birthright of every one. Yet one political consequence has followed, that must not be entirely overlooked. In ancient states a citizen prided himself on his freedom, and felt impelled by a kind of party spirit as it were to defend the liberties of his country. In modern Europe, to be free is no distinction; it does not prevent men from being sordid, dependent, totally ignorant, and little better than the cattle of the field: a new distinction therefore has been desired, and vanity seeks to be noble. A strange result which was not easily to be

foreseen has followed. The distinction of freedom induced men to defend liberty; the distinction of nobility has induced them to defend a monopoly of power and privilege, and to favour a system of political slavery nearly as degrading to human nature as the personal slavery of ancient republics.

Govern-ment.

This brings me to take a survey of the nature of modern governments.

The principle upon which the modern governments of Europe have been formed, and at present rest, is totally different from that upon which Athens, Sparta, Rome, Carthage, and other celebrated states of antiquity were founded. These famous republics were not countries, but cities; our words *political* and *civil*, mean equally, in their origin, things relating to a city; and the views of ancient legislators did not extend beyond the limits of a single town and its neighbourhood. In these free communities, the character of member of the state must have predominated over every other. There could be no greater interest, no higher concern than that of governing the commonwealth. Accordingly we find that many of those rights which we consider as invaluable portions of our liberty, were perpetually forced to yield to the general sense of the public welfare. The power which every man wishes to have in the disposal of his own person and property, was moulded into the form in which the general legislature thought it best adapted to form part of a political union. In Sparta the citizens were forbidden to acquire riches, and it would have been a high crime in the king to have had a board separate from the public tables. In Athens the property of the wealthy was, in point of fact, always at the disposal of the community for the general good. There was no such thing as a separate and independent existence apart

from the political contentions, and violent parties which interested and divided the state. Not so in modern states. From the time that the irruption of the barbarians had ceased, and the lands of the various countries in Europe were finally divided among the conquerors and the conquered, the possession of property became a subject of greater concern than political power. The leaders and the people, separated from their fellow conquerors by immense tracts of fen and forest, gradually lost the custom of the German tribes described by Tacitus, of assembling on every occasion, and regulating their common affairs by common consent: the greatness of the barons lay in their enjoyment of the land, and their immediate influence over their neighbourhood of vassals: the strength and happiness of the yeomen consisted in the possession of an independent freehold. Hence the meetings of the great Councils became less frequent and less decisive; government was converted into a matter of permission. From this time, therefore, its nature was totally altered; instead of being simply an expression of the will of the whole community, it became a trust, permanently placed in the hands of the few for the protection of the whole. For a long period, indeed, the supreme power floated between the King and the Aristocracy, occasioning fierce contests, which greatly delayed and prevented the progress of wealth and civilization.

It is far from being my intention, as I have before said, to enter at this place into an examination of the governments of the middle ages, which require, and have obtained, the undivided attention and industrious sagacity of authors devoted to that pursuit alone. Yet I may remark that the

elements of all feudal states were the same; a king, partly hereditary, and partly elected; a nobility, sometimes obedient and sometimes independent; a general assembly of clergy, nobles, and people, at one time conceding to their sovereign power incompatible with freedom, and at another depriving him of the authority necessary to preserve internal peace. The kings of France were surpassed in real power by many of their vassals: The kings of Leon and Castile were regularly elected by the Cortes, and the nobility of Arragon formally claimed the privilege of deposing their sovereign. In those times rapine and disorder prevailed; justice could not be obtained but at the point of the sword; license was every where, and liberty no where. The invasions of royal prerogative were opposed by the excesses of popular tumult: commerce and industry were overwhelmed by feudal rights, and every order of the state acquired the supreme direction of the helm of government in turn, only to shew itself unworthy to retain it. Each of the different bodies in the community laid claim by turns to exorbitant privileges, none had an undisputed right to a just and a legal authority.

When at length the interests of increasing wealth, and more diffused knowledge required a more stable government, the nations of Europe, had they been wise, would have equitably divided the supreme power between the king, the nobles, and the people. Such a combination, however, difficult at all times, and in all countries, could hardly be expected to arise from the struggles and convulsions of nations little advanced in the science of government. Hence it is by no means surprising, that of all the states which once enjoyed

representative assemblies, scarcely any except England, which was happily separated from the rest, worked out a constitution founded on the division of the three powers. It was more natural and more easy for the purpose of at once obtaining the benefits of order to throw a preponderating weight into the balance of one. Nor is it surprising, that of the three orders, the king should, in almost every instance, have received the lion's portion of the prey. By his position he was alone, while the other branches of the state were divided: he could pursue a system, while his co-partners found difficulty in agreeing on a single measure. The nobles had, in most countries, become the enemies of the people by molesting and robbing merchants and traders, who thence had recourse to the king as the fountain of justice, and the protector of internal peace. The king, on his side, was glad to encourage commerce in its beginning, in order to obtain a counterpoise to the power of his nobility. When afterwards, by the progress of wealth, the people had become possessed of great importance in the state, their new pretensions were as hostile to the exclusive privileges of the nobility, as to the arbitrary prerogative of the sovereign. It is no wonder therefore, that the king was then assisted by the nobility, in their turn, in crushing the demands of the people, or that by making use of one against the other, he finally saw himself enabled to treat with contempt the remonstrances of both.

In considering the causes of the supremacy obtained by monarchs, much also is to be attributed to the personal qualities of the sovereigns who reigned towards the close of the fifteenth century. The kings of that day were more enlightened than the nobles of the country, and had much

more knowledge of public affairs than the inhabitants of cities. Louis the XIth of France, Henry the VIIth of England, and Ferdinand of Arragon, most skilfully took advantage of the period when the nations of Europe were too much civilized to bear any longer the anarchy of former ages, but not sufficiently so to form a regular government for themselves. The characters of these kings have been compared; they were all prudent men, and profound statesmen; the likeness of the time completed the resemblance. Lewis was the most remarkable for cruelty, Henry for avarice, and Ferdinand for perfidy. Each succeeded in his object, but Lewis most fully and completely. The people of France had been already subdued in the preceding reigns, and it only remained for him to oppress the nobles. The barons were more divided from the people in France than in Spain, and in Spain more than in England. The States-general of France were soon blotted out of her government; a mine was laid in Spain for the destruction of the Cortes; but neither the subtle artifice of Henry the VIIth. nor the jovial disposition of Henry the VIIIth. could induce the people of England to part for ever with their Parliaments. Even the law of the latter end of Henry the VIIIth., so often quoted, which gives to the King's Proclamations the authority of law, contains proofs of the jealousy with which the sound part of the nation regarded the heedless confidence of their fellow subjects. The obedience to be given to the King's Proclamations is confined to those which shall not affect life or property, and which shall not be in derogation or diminution of the established laws, rights, and privileges of the realm. The reasons of the difference in the fate of the kingdom of England from that of

France, however, require a separate enquiry, and will form an interesting subject of investigation.

To the same period of the 15th century, we must refer the downfall of the free republics of Italy. Florence, the seat of freedom and of genius, was allured into the flowery path of slavery by Cosmo and Lorenzo de Medicis. Letters and Arts remained, but with the spirit of liberty in Florence, the root of Italian greatness perished; the leaves and the flowers remained for awhile, and threw blossoms over the decayed trunk, but in due time they also faded and perished. Of all the republics which had made so great a stir in the world, Venice alone remained, secured by her situation and her wealth.

Germany continued apparently in the same state of imperfect union in which she had long subsisted; but the power of the Emperor there also was increased, and soon afterwards received such decisive augmentations as to enable Charles the Vth. to consolidate in that empire a peculiar species of absolute government.

Thus the period of the revival of letters, to which we are accustomed to look back as the commencement of every liberal art and civilized institution, was in fact the æra of the downfall of freedom, and of the establishment of arbitrary power. If it is asked, how it happened that the people of the continent of Europe resigned their ancient liberties and prescriptive constitutions with such a degrading tameness, the cause is no doubt to be found in the principle I have before mentioned, viz. the love of property. It was this which induced men to ask for established laws, and a regular administration of justice, as the chief benefits to be acquired

by society. There are not many cases, it was vulgarly thought, in which the sovereign could have an interest in attacking the life or property of a citizen in violation of established law. So as the government left their subjects undisturbed in the enjoyment of property and ease, therefore, the community was ready to leave the government to act as it pleased in matters of political concern. Hence an indifference prevailed on the continent from the beginning of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century on questions of mere liberty.

Relations of governments to each other.

It is remarkable that, with the exceptions of Holland and Switzerland, no republic of importance ever entered into the system. From this constitution several consequences have arisen respecting the relations of the different governments to each other, and to the people who lived under them. It may guide our future researches if I now make some remarks upon both these heads. In the first place, it will be remarked that the history of Europe is, for the most part, a relation of the resolutions of cabinets, and the policy of courts. The people at large have been shut out from any share in the deliberations on state affairs; and would we know why France invaded Holland in 1672, or Spain called a prince of the House of Bourbon to the succession, we must study the views of Lewis XIV. and observe the court of Charles the Second. Hence it has happened, that the sovereigns of Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, have shed the blood of their subjects in quarrels in which those subjects had no interest, and served merely as instruments of the passions of their masters. The great armaments of modern times have been fitted out but too frequently to gratify the ambition of

some youthful king, or to favour the intrigue of some favourite courtier. Yet it must be granted, that if the secret history of cabinets makes modern wars appear more capricious and unreasonable, the very absence of a great national cause, and great popular excitement, has contributed to render them less ferocious. The want of violent emotion has tended to maintain that courtesy and kindnesswhich the spirit of chivalry formerly inculcated. How different is the behaviour of the Duke of Marlborough to Marshal Tallard from that of a Roman general dragging a captive monarch at his chariot wheels amidst the applause of the city rabble!

Balance of power.

The necessity of war is occasioned by the want of a supreme judge, who may decide on the quarrels of nations, as an ordinary tribunal pronounces upon the disputes of individuals. This is a defect which it appears to me can never be completely supplied; for dream as we may of a perpetual peace, it is impossible to erect any court with power of enforcing its decrees against a party who chooses to have recourse to arms. The very same spirit of encroachment which would lead a king to incur the censures of such a tribunal would excite him to despise its mandates, and the very power which made it necessary to repress his ambition of universal monarchy would enable him to set its judgment at defiance. In the failure of any perfect remedy, however, for the disorder of war, a corrector of its evils has been found in the system called the Balance of Power. Europe being divided into many separate states, it has been the established policy of all, that when any one, by its aggrandizement, threatened the general safety, the

rest should unite to defend their independence. Thus the House of Austria, under Philip II. were resisted by the union of Henry the IVth, of France, Elizabeth of England, and the Protestant States of Europe. Thus Lewis the XIVth was checked by William the IIIrd, England, Holland, and the Empire. Thus Napoleon Bonaparte, who was nearer complete success than either of the other two, was overthrown by the national spirit of the Spanish, German, and Russian people, who at length united with England, in destroying the gigantic power under which most of the sovreigns of Europe had lain prostrate.

The principle of union for mutual defence which constitutes the balance of power was not new in the history of the world. It was known and practised among the republics of ancient Greece, and those of modern Italy. It is in fact the natural defence of the weaker members of a system or collection of powers.

One of the most important effects of the balance of power has been, that the Powers have made war on each other not for the purposes of general conquest, but for the acquisition of some petty territory, the defence of some trifling interest, or the revenge of some fortuitous insult. Sovereigns have not dared to avow a purpose of uniting the whole of an independent state to their own provinces. The ambition of the Macedonian hero or Roman Senate has been rarely imitated in Europe. It were difficult to find a better instance of this than the designs of Lewis the XIVth, in the war of the succession of Spain. Had he been at liberty to indulge his natural inclinations he would have seized the succession of Charles the IId. for himself, and united France, Spain, South America, the Netherlands,

Milan, Naples, and Sicily under one head. But the jealousy of the surrounding Powers rendered any attempt of the kind so hazardous, that it never seems to have entered into the contemplation either of himself, or any of his council. Charles the XIIth of Sweden, indeed, acted the part of a conqueror, but his life forms an episode in the history of Europe, and his character is quite out of keeping with the rest of the picture of the modern world. Generally speaking, the wars of modern states have been concluded either with the cession of some small province, or the acquisition of some mercantile advantages. There is another species of war, however, which has not been unfrequent, *videlicet*, wars undertaken for the maintenance of national honour. In these cases, nations have acted as an individual gentleman of modern times, and challenged one another for the purpose of wiping off a stain either real or imaginary, thrown upon their reputation. Of this nature were the disputes between England and Holland concerning the flag; the various contests between different states respecting precedency, and many others.

Law of Nations.

The usages of war and of peace in modern Europe have been formed into a system by the writers on the law of nations. The Dutch and German scholars who were employed to write the manifestos, or digest the treaties of the various powers of the Continent, endeavoured to place the relations of states with one another upon a philosophical foundation, and to build upon it a solid and symmetrical edifice. Considered as philosophers, it must be confessed that their system is shallow and chimerical, resting upon a vision which they call the state of nature; and that their metaphysical doctrines, unsound and unreal in themselves, are

weakened rather than supported by pedantic quotations often wholly without aim or point, and a tedious reference to authorities no way applicable to the subject; but considered as writers influencing the conduct of men whose final argument was cannon, too much praise cannot well be given to their conscientious distinctions of right and wrong, their cautious respect for the independence of nations, their solemn deference for all the usages which mitigate the evils of war, and improve the happy intercourse of peace. Hence they have been variously judged according to the occupation and habits of those who have undertaken to judge them; philosophers have turned from them with contempt, and left them to the dust of libraries; statesmen have gathered their sayings, and called upon the world to admire and follow their decisions. Of their influence upon the history of Europe, there will be other occasions to speak; at present, I will only say that although kings in some measure made, what is improperly called the law of nations, follow them, instead of following the law, yet every sovereign had in his cabinet persons skilled in this science, who reacted upon kings, and confined ambition within rules that were some check upon its outrages.

Reformation.

There is a period in the history of Europe when every commotion on its surface was occasioned by one cause, deeply seated, like the internal fire that is supposed to have produced the earthquake at Lisbon; and like it, breaking out with violence in one place, and making itself felt in every part of the globe. This cause was the Reformation. From 1520 to 1649 the Reformation was the great lever of Europe. From that time the violence of the convulsion abated, but its influence continued to be perceptible till the accession of

the House of Hanover in England, and the alliance between George I. and the Regent Duke of Orleans.

The Reformation, and the French Revolution, may be regarded as the great stations from which future historians will date the events of modern history.

At first sight perhaps it may appear that either of these two general changes might have happened before the other. It may seem that a philosopher who was speculating with views enlarged beyond those of his time, in the middle of the 15th century, on the consequences of the discovery of printing, might as well predict that a great struggle would take place between kings and their people for the cause of arbitrary or limited monarchy, as that great innovations would be made in religion: indeed in some respects, the former might seem much the more likely of the two. The authority of the temporal sovereign had been more frequently disputed than that of the Pope; and in the laws and customs of all nations were to be found the principles of a representative government. The reasons why the spiritual despotism was the first shaken off are however many and weighty. The strongest perhaps is, that the cause of religious reform united nearly all interests, which political liberty, except in England, failed in accomplishing. Kings and nobles joined with religious enthusiasts and a wild populace in throwing off a distant yoke, which oppressed them with tributes, and retained from their grasp the richest and fairest possessions of their land. The priesthood alone had an interest in the abuse, and when they were not supported by the government or nobility, their power had no substantial foundation. The moral influence which they had so long possessed, was founded upon super-

stitions so gross and absurd, that the knowledge of the Bible, and the light which was beginning to break upon Europe were sufficient to dissolve it into air. Even where the religion of Rome was retained, it was purged of the immoral practices and more obvious delusions by which it had been upheld and accompanied. The authority of kings was far from being founded on a base equally unsound. Real benefits attended their government; real interests were involved in the maintenance of their power. The reformation, however, did likewise spread far and wide the seeds of political reform: the liberty of judgment upon which it rested, could not fail to attack the despotic authority of our temporal, as well as of our spiritual masters. Bossuet considers the execution of Charles I. as a judgment upon the English sovereign and nation for their admission of heresy. Whether a judgment or not, it assuredly was a consequence, and to the same cause England owes that happy freedom which she has enjoyed.

So long as the spirit of the reformation was in full force, it was an element in all the wars, all the insurrections, all the political crimes, and all the political virtues of Europe. In every state there existed a party favourable to the reformation; in every state there was a party opposed to it. The friends of the reformation in one country assisted those of another; so likewise did its opponents aid each other in extinguishing the flame; and men were more widely distinguished by the spirit of the sect they had embraced, than by the ancient marks of kindred and of country. Uniformity of creed was the pious, but vain and cruel object of all; every one was aware that the triumph of the ancient faith, or of the new doctrine in one country, was but the prelude

to fresh contests with augmented violence in another. Hence the brotherhood of all Protestants on the one side, and of all Papists on the other; hence the chivalrous armaments of the English and the Germans to assist the Flemings, and the French; hence the intrigues of Spain and Rome in the heart of every country in Europe. The conclusion of this long contest at the accession of the House of Hanover left the Protestants in possession of England, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, Saxony, and many of the smaller states of the north of Germany; but on the other hand, they had been defeated and utterly extirpated in Spain, Italy, Bohemia, and the south of Germany, and reduced to the most miserable state of proscription and obscurity in France.

The whole system of the balance of power may be considered as having been subverted by the partition of Poland. The success of that enterprize put an end at once to the moral feeling, and physical divisions on which the ancient law of Europe was founded. Catherine of Russia despised a code which had been established and recognized while her empire was still wholly barbarous; her neighbour of Prussia, weak in territory, unprincipled in conduct, readily joined her; and Maria Theresa, to the disgrace of her name, for the misfortune of Europe, and to her own unavailing regret, sanctioned the destruction of the law of nations, which, it has been truly said, had often before been violated, but was now totally overthrown.

Internal government.

There remains the second branch of this subject, namely, to take a view of the monarchies of Europe, considered in relation to their subjects. Let us first observe, the extent of the authority of kings, and the inviolability of the law under

which they claimed it. They assumed an absolute right of disposing of the lives and properties of their subjects by a commission from the Divine Creator of all things, authorizing them and their descendants to reign for ever. This doctrine was compounded partly of the slavish maxims of the Roman Imperial law; partly of the Jewish dispensation; and partly of the precepts found in the books of revealed religion. The theory of the Roman law was, that the Emperor held by various titles all the authority which the Roman people once divided amongst the various offices of Consul, Pontifex, Tribune of the people, Military Tribune, &c. The Jewish dispensation teaches us that kings were selected by heaven itself to reign over the Jews. The epistles of St. Paul enjoin his disciples to obey, and order them to preserve inviolate that allegiance which in the fervour of enthusiasm created by a new revelation they were probably inclined to renounce.* Fortified with these authorities, and supported by

* The passage of St. Paul, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God," has been the source of the slavish doctrines held by Christian divines in modern times. Yet upon the slightest examination the interpretation affixed to it during several centuries of ignorance or bigotry will appear erroneous. The enemies of Christ wished to impute to him that his intentions aimed at the destruction of the governments of the earth in order to substitute his own power, and even some of his own followers imagined that by the new dispensation they were absolved from all civil duties, and were to form part of a society constituted on a new basis. To do away this error, Christ said, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's:" and with the same view, St. Paul informed his followers that they were not absolved from the duties of allegiance, and that civil government was an institution approved by God. In short, the Christian religion left the question of government exactly where it found it, and by no means introduced new political maxims. Neither Christ nor his apostles anywhere recommend any particular form of government

the lawyers and clergy of their dominions, the kings of Europe did not hesitate to claim a power which Augustus or Charlemagne would have deemed exorbitant. In England, indeed, this degrading dogma did not long prevail. Lord Shaftesbury, speaking of it in one of his speeches, calls it the Laudean doctrine, but in fact, it was anterior to Laud, and had been introduced into this country by James the First. It was received with still more favour by the clergy, than by the lawyers or soldiers of the Cavalier party, for we nowhere find it so strongly professed as in the speech of the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, and the infamous decree of the University of Oxford, afterwards ordered to be burnt by the common hangman. The Revolution of 1688, however, swept away this, together with other usurpations of the House of Stuart; and the Act of Settlement is too recent, and too authentic an instrument to allow of the doctrine being speedily revived in favour of the House of Brunswick. But the Continent was not so fortunate; no sooner were the ancient liberties of Europe subverted, than each sovereign, from his own throne, promulgated the doctrine that he was the Vicegerent of God, and that any attempt to disturb or limit his authority, involved in it the sin of impiety, as well as the crime of rebellion.

This theory, as despotic and as destructive of freedom as the theocratic dogma of the Turkish sultans, is nowhere to be found so positively and expressly laid down as in the writings of Lewis the XIVth. He founded his supreme power not on

as divine, teach that a monarchy is more sacred than a republic, or abolish the rights inherent in mankind of constituting their government in the form and manner they think best adapted for their happiness and security.

the laws of his kingdom, or the consent of the nation, but on the doctrine that kings were appointed and maintained in their thrones by God himself. In speaking to his son of the reverence due to religion, he says: "To tell you the truth, my son, we are wanting not only in justice, but in prudence, when we are wanting in veneration for him of whom we are only the lieutenants. Our submission for him, is the rule and the example of that which is due to us. The armies, the councils, all human industry, would be weak means of maintaining us upon the throne, if every one believed that he had the same right as we, and did not revere a superior power, of which ours is a part. The public homage which we render to this invisible power might justly be styled the first and most important part of our policy, if it were not that it ought to have a motive more noble and more disinterested."*

He explains his doctrine still more fully when speaking of the deposition of Alfonso, king of Portugal, whose imbecility of mind was notorious. After condemning the act in the strongest terms, "He who has given kings to men," adds the royal author, "has willed that they should be respected as his lieutenants, reserving to himself alone the right of examining their conduct. His will is, that whosoever is born a subject, *should obey without discernment;* and this law, so express, and so universal, is not made in favour of princes alone, but is salutary to the people themselves, upon whom it is imposed, and who can never violate it without being exposed to evils more terrible than those from which they pretend to free themselves. But it is not just that sovereigns who make profession of this holy doctrine should take

* Oeuvres de Louis Quatorze, vol. i. p. 90.

advantage of the innocence with which it inspires their people, to live on their side with more license. They should consider that their subjects, seeing them plunged in blood and vice, cannot render to their persons the respect due to their dignity, nor recognise them as the living images of him who is all holy, as well as all powerful."*

It will be seen that in propounding this tremendous doctrine, Lewis declares that passive obedience is salutary to the people themselves. He considers monarchy as the gift of a benevolent Deity to mankind. Yet what benefits, we may ask, can compensate for the evil of obeying a prince who, to use the expression of Lewis is "plunged in blood and vice?"† A sovereign of this atrocious nature, it is evident, acts against the very principles upon which society is constituted. Governors are made to distribute justice and preserve peace. A wicked king sacrifices law to his caprice, and gives authority to robbery and murder.

To some, perhaps, it will appear needless to make any further observations on a doctrine which places no limit to royal power but the discretion of kings themselves, and leaves nations bound in hopeless irredeemable slavery to follow the will of a monster, or obey the judgement of a madman. It may indeed well be thought a superfluous task to examine a theory of government which philosophy rejects, and experience has confuted; a theory which is no less injurious to Divine Providence than it is degrading to human nature. Yet it is the duty of history to notice those systems of law or policy by which nations have been governed; a

* Oeuvres de Louis Quatorze, vol. ii. p. 336.

† Noyé dans le sang et le vice.

principle of rule which pervaded more than half of Europe, and had nearly prevailed over the rest, is justly entitled to attention. Nay, it is even possible absolute monarchy may be a blessing so great, that we are bound to bear from time to time the excesses of a tyrant, in order to secure the general advantages which are promised to implicit confidence and passive obedience.

Upon the first glance, however, it is manifest that facts do not bear out the supposition of Lewis, that princes derive their origin from the choice of God alone. Among the contradictions to his theory which may be derived from the most cursory perusal of history, is the deposition of two successive dynasties from that throne which Lewis himself occupied. When the Merovingian kings had become so contemptible as to fall entirely under the authority of the mayor of the palace, Pepin sent to the Pope to propose to him, as a case of conscience, whether it were fit, in the present situation of Europe, that a man incapable of reigning, should hold in France the rank of king, whilst the royal power was exercised by another, who made a right use of it. The Pope answered, that it was better to give the title of king to him who exercised the authority. In consequence of this decision, Childeric and his son were imprisoned in a monastery, and Pepin assumed the crown.*

Little more than a hundred years after this, we find the chief of the second race confessing that he held his crown by the authority of the Bishops. In a manifesto against the Archbishop of Sens and others, who had revolted, he said, "I ought not to have been deposed before I had been

* Millot, Élémens de l'Histoire de France, vol. i. p. 87.

judged by the bishops, who gave me the royal unction; they are the thrones of God, and I have always submitted myself, as I am still ready to do, to their correction."*

At length another revolution deposed the dynasty of Charlemagne: Hugh Capet seized the throne, and made prisoner Charles of Lorrain, the legitimate heir.

These events undoubtedly throw some doubts upon the infallibility of the monarchical dogma. Lewis indeed alleges that Hugh Capet took possession of the crown with the approbation of Providence; but it is not clear why an enterprize sanctioned by divine authority in the 10th century, should never again be repeated without exciting the divine displeasure.

Nor is Lewis more fortunate in his assertion, that rebellious nations bring down upon their heads greater misfortunes than those from which they pretend to free themselves. From the commencement of his reign he had found the revolted Dutch more wealthy, more prosperous, and more powerful, than the absolute monarchy of Spain, and the Indies; and before the close of his career, he was condemned to see his own loyal troops defeated by the armies and people of the usurper, Anne.

Yet let us not decide absolutely from these facts, that the monarchical dogma is not founded in truth. If we should find that in France and Spain, where it has been most faithfully received, it produced a greater degree of happiness to that portion of mankind which lived beneath its influence than other nations enjoyed, we may be inclined to think that the partizans of passive obedience were in the right. If, on

* Millot, p. 145.

the contrary, it failed in obtaining for the majority of the people the blessings which it pretended to dispense, we must then doubt the justice of the doctrine. The point can only be ascertained by a patient examination of the state of France and Spain with respect to the relations between the governors and the governed; and to this neglected investigation the historian of modern Europe is bound to turn all the powers of his mind.

Before noticing this enquiry, however, there is one simple view which may be taken as a criterion of the question, whether absolute unlimited irresponsible monarchs form the best government by which nations can be ruled. Are kings usually the best and wisest men of the community? This question Lewis himself seems to have resolved in the negative in a very singular passage. "Private men," he says, "have, as it were, the road to virtue chalked out for them in the observance of the public ordinances to which they are subject. The law which prescribes to them what they are to do, the concurrence of a whole people in obeying it, the fear of punishment, and the hope of reward, are continual supports attached to aid their weakness, and of which the elevation of our rank deprives us. Perhaps there are many good subjects who would be very bad princes; it is much easier to obey a superior, than to govern oneself; and when one can do to all that one wills, it is not easy to will nothing but what one ought."*

The difficulty which is here so well stated by Lewis, is found in practice to be so great, that it is more difficult to find a good absolute king than a good member of any

* Oeuvres de Louis XIV. t. 2. p. 81.

other profession or *metier*, as Lewis himself calls the royal station. Yet when I say this, I am far from wishing to attribute the defect to any fault in unlimited monarchs that renders them incapable of virtue, or to convert the simple fact into a subject of virulence and invective. Still less ought the description which appertains to the absolute monarch to be applied to the limited king, who belongs to a totally different species of mankind.

With these qualifications, then, it may be fairly stated as the misfortune of princes, that they receive a worse education than any other persons in the community. The heirs of a throne are accustomed to have their caprices indulged, their faults encouraged, all restraint thrown aside, all the moral discipline by which virtue is taught and enforced utterly neglected. Villeroi, the governor of Lewis the XIVth. during his childhood, said that the governors of young princes were liable to be hated by them when they grew up, and for this reason gave way to all the wishes and whims of his pupil. His example has been too generally followed. Sometimes the instruction of the heir-apparent is neglected from jealousy, sometimes from flattery; in every case young princes soon learn that they need know nothing, and may expect every thing. Fortune holds out to them a certainty of power and pre-eminence, which is a premium on indolence and ignorance. In short, in contradistinction to other professions, there is nothing which so much unfits a man for the exercise of unlimited power as his being bred up for that express purpose. If we look at the history of the first Roman Emperors, we shall see that those were the best who were not educated for the throne. Marcus Aurelius was born a private man:

Commodus his son, in the purple: Trajan rose by merit, Caligula by birth. In the same way the few among modern sovereigns who have enjoyed a reputation equal to that of great ministers, have been tried in adversity; Henry the IVth. of France was a better kind of usurper; Elizabeth of England was for a long time disinherited, and had a competition for the throne; William the IIIrd. was king only by election. It is found in general, nor is it in nature that it should be otherwise, that kings are torpid and indifferent to the welfare of their kingdoms, in proportion as their power is secure and undisturbed. Hence, the more firmly established a dynasty, the worse is the chance of its subjects, and the greater the danger of misrule.

It is one of the singular consequences of the system of passive obedience to certain royal families, that the persons in whose favour the dogma seems to have been created, have generally been deprived of all power. The tendency of their education is such that they become incapable of exercising the powers of goverment themselves, and are obliged to confide entirely to their ministers. Lewis the XIIIth. was so completely in the hands of Richelieu, that he did not dare shew any tenderness to his Queen, for fear he should offend his imperious servant; and he owned to his friend and favourite, Cinq-Mars, that if the Cardinal insisted upon it, he should be obliged to sacrifice him, which he actually did some time after. Lewis the XVth. was always governed by his mistresses or favourites; and was even in the habit of jesting upon his own total want of power. One of his personal favourites being applied to by a relative in the country for a place, answered, "If ever the king comes to

have any influence, I will speak on your behalf." Philip the Vth. was so governed by the princess Orsini, that when his new Queen came to Spain, he wrote to her to rid him of the princess, saying, that if she once listened to her, they would both be completely in her power, even in their most private and domestic intercourse. Such were the father, the grandson, and the great-grandson of Lewis the XIVth. If we look to the Austrian branch in Spain, we find that when the Duke of Braganza deprived Philip the IVth. of Portugal, his minister came to him and wished him joy of the news, saying the Duke of Braganza was in rebellion, and therefore all his property might be confiscated. Charles the IInd. his successor, was so ignorant that he did not know Mons belonged to him, and when he heard of its being taken, remarked he was very sorry for his ally William the IIIrd.

It appears therefore that the interests of kings themselves, as well as of their subjects, are in favour of limited monarchy. A limited king, far from being the weak, spoilt, ignorant creature that has been described, is informed of all that takes place in his kingdom, and may hear the real situation of his kingdom from the mouths of his subjects. It is in his power to change his ministers, only taking care that they should be men of some character and talent. A king of an absolute monarchy, on the other hand, in the state of ignorance and incapacity we have described, naturally becomes afraid of the minister he has chosen. Hence it is that so many absolute sovereigns, Lewis the XVth., the kings of Spain, of Portugal, and others, have always shewn the greatest favour to their ministers, at the moment previous to their dismissal. It is a blow which a timid absolute king is always afraid to

strike; and many a sovereign who appeared to the world to rule his kingdom by a nod, has been obliged to retain in his cabinet the object of his deepest aversion, from the dread of committing himself in a contest with a person who knows the world, and is acquainted with the manner of performing the business of the state.

Such are the results to kings themselves of the dogma of divine right and passive obedience. In ancient times arbitrary monarchy produced, as Aristotle said it must do, beasts in human shape, monsters who indulged every passion to the excess of wolves and bears. In modern times, when the controul of opinion and the influence of aristocracy have checked the extravagance of regal passion, it has produced men of inferior understandings, timid, indolent, fearful, and suspicious.

One great reason for this inferiority is, the society in which kings live. Their nobles are afraid of conversing with them upon any rational topic. On this subject let us hear Besenval, who was himself a courtier, and enjoyed long the intimacy of Lewis the XVth. and XVIth. He gives us the following account of the society of kings. "With them," (i. e. kings) he says, "there is hardly any subject of conversation: one cannot certainly talk to them of politics, or of the news of the day; that would be to want respect, from the impossibility in which they are of answering; to dilate upon the administration, and to discuss it, would likewise be to oblige them to keep silence, and to fall oneself into the situation of attacking those who have offices, of hurting them, or of making oneself enemies to no purpose. An event of society, of whatever nature it may be, presents the same difficulties:

besides, kings are not sufficiently acquainted either with its forms, or with those who compose it, to judge otherwise than with prejudice. One must forbid oneself the very word of religion; kings are obliged to respect it: past wars, ancient history, events sometime gone by, sciences, and literature, might furnish matter for conversation, but where should we find courtiers sufficiently well-informed to talk on these subjects? It is rare to find kings able to comprehend them. There remain therefore only subjects which mean nothing, common places, plays, or the chase: even in these, to blame a play, is to attack the author or director; and to speak ill of a day's hunting, is to make enemies of persons who are employed to make it succeed, and who are the objects of their master's partiality."

"One cannot flatter oneself to interest kings by their pursuits; it is very rare that they have any, and they find so much facility in satisfying their desires, that they are generally disgusted (*blasés*) before they have enjoyed: to have pleasures, it is necessary to combat obstacles, to surmount difficulties, to know privations. Sovereigns cannot feel these excitements except in the pursuit of glory, or the chase, the results of which are always uncertain. Thus we see them all occupied with one of these two passions; by glory, when they are endowed with an elevated mind; by the chase, when they have a common one."

"As sovereigns cannot flatter themselves with the hope of being loved for their own sakes, distrust forms the foundation of their character; a disposition always opposed to the intimate connections which subsist among individuals. Habituated to the homage which is paid them, and dispensed from

making any return, they easily accustom themselves to believe that others owe every thing to them, and that they owe nothing to their subjects. The courtier, the most incensed against his king, is obliged from policy, not only to suppress his resentment, but even to redouble his attentions, for fear his countenance may offend an imperious master, and deprive him of the means of advancing his fortune." Besenval concludes by saying, "that he thinks it better sovereigns should be concealed from their subjects, because from their want of education, they cannot fail to inspire a disadvantageous opinion of their knowledge and capacity."* Such is the opinion of a man of the world, founded upon long experience.

"Kings," says Mr. Burke, "are fond of low company." Nor is this surprising. They naturally seek the fellowship of men; the pomp of royalty is but a poor compensation for its solitude; and the more a king is endowed with the best social qualities of the heart and of the head, the more will he seek relief from his magnificent burthen in the consolations of friendship and the pleasures of society. But an immense distance separates him from the nobility who are nearest to him in rank; he stands as it were on the top of a mountain, and he dares not descend from his height lest he should place himself on a level with those who are his immediate inferiors in the state. They, on their side, omit no part of the etiquette which it is part of their allegiance, and of his greatness to observe. With persons of a lower situation, however, the difficulty is not so great. In the society of men who are utterly insignificant on the score of rank and fortune, the sovereign imagines he may unbend securely; no

* Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 118.

familiarity on his part can raise them to substantive importance, and no liberties which they assume in moments of ease can prevent his reducing them by a nod to their original nothingness. Hence, an emperor of the world loves the society of the kitchen, and willingly endures vulgarity with which a proud noble would disdain to mingle. Hence, likewise, his mind is continually perverted by the interested representations of low courtiers, who naturally instil into him a jealousy of those, whose industry and prudence, have raised them to the situation of his ministers, and whose knowledge gives them an advantage over him in every discussion of state affairs. If he is allowed to have his own way, he removes from his councils every one whose eminence mortifies his pride; he confides his kingdom to the guidance of minions whose rule is disguised in the shape of flattery; and while he is indulging their avarice and ambition, he thinks his own maudlin majesty the object of the veneration of the whole world.

But let us for a moment turn to consider Lewis the XIVth. himself. He is a most favourable specimen of fortune. Born in a stormy time, he had an opportunity of studying the character of mankind during dissensions, which fell calm of themselves at the moment he became of age to assume the government. Let us add to this, he was fortunate in disposition: not inclined, on the one hand, to those savage excesses of vice to which absolute monarchs are prone, nor liable to sink, on the other, into that indolence which is now the more general consequence of royal power. He was by nature inclined to high and polished society; exceedingly jealous of his reputation, and passionately fond of the business of a king. It was a pleasure to him to examine the smallest details

of administration; and whilst his vigilance in this respect preserved the wheels of government from rust, his love of glory of all kinds gave a spring to talent of every description. Yet what was the result? After a long series of successful ambition rather than of real greatness, the king declined, and the nation with him: for the weakness of an absolute king causes the weakness of the nation.* His armies ill-commanded, received terrible defeats. His people suffered famine from the burthens which his ambition imposed. To crown all, the proudest of mankind became the husband, the credulous and servile husband, of the servant of his mistress. When married to this woman of agreeable talents, but of a narrow mind, he obliged the nation to bear on their shoulders the flagellation which his sins had deserved. A million of the most industrious, most honest subjects of France were, without any disobedience on their part, tortured, banished, imprisoned, and even murdered. Is this a character any king would wish to have? What sovereign of real benevolence would not rather surrender all hopes of fame, than pass to posterity as the persecutor of his people!

It is pretended by some, that a great illness caused the change in the mind and fortunes of Lewis. I am not disposed in this place to contradict such an opinion; and I believe that in general, it would be more reasonable to attribute the actions of kings to their diseases, than to attribute their deaths to their sorrows. But what are we to think of a form of government, the whole spirit of which may be changed by an

* —fraco Re fa forte gente fraca.
A weak King makes a strong people weak.
Camoens.

ague? What reliance can we place on the public prosperity which may be destroyed by a fever in the veins of one man? To a certain degree, undoubtedly, a free state will also be affected by the disease or death of a great captain or minister, but the whole nation is at hand to supply his place. An imbecile king remains at once the weakest and the most powerful man in his dominions.

So far I have treated of absolute monarchy as it regards kings themselves. The other and still more important branch of enquiry remains; namely, whether, in spite of these defects in the rulers, the people under them enjoyed the benefits which are reasonably to be expected from a mild and just government?

This point, as I have said above, can only be ascertained by tracing patiently the history of France and Spain. Some general remarks, however, may lead the reader to an understanding of the great events which have marked the last half century.

The objects of men in suffering the restraints of civil government are chiefly the following:

First; to obtain protection against the violence of the members of their own society. Secondly; to obtain means of protection against the violence of other societies or states. These are the the primary ends of all government. But as all power leads directly to abuse, there come to be other ends equally necessary to be obtained, in order to protect the community from the very government which they themselves maintain and support for the purposes of defence and security. The two principal of these are; the one, that no other restraints be imposed than those which are necessary to provide

for the safety of the citizen and the state; and the other, that no other distinctions be made between different classes of the people than such as have in them more of benefit to the society at large, than of injury to those who are deprived of them. In these two conditions consist liberty and equality; I mean civil liberty, and equality in the eye of the law.

Now these conditions were not observed in the absolute monarchies of Europe. Generally speaking, they had the following glaring defects:

First. Justice was not fairly done between man and man; but either partially exercised, or basely sold, to the great injury of the people at large.

Second. The money that was raised to provide for the expenses of justice, and of defending the state against foreign enemies, was squandered among the vilest of the nation, bestowed on sycophants, knaves and harlots; wasted in dress, riot and debauchery.

Third. Persons were placed in the most important situations, charged with the conduct of armies, or the management of negociations, without any qualification but interest and subserviency.

Fourth. Powers, which the experience of other governments had shewn not to be necessary, were exercised by princes and their ministers; for instance—the power of imprisoning and otherwise destroying the subject at will; a power grievous in its application, and peculiarly liable to abuse.

Fifth. Restraints were placed upon the freedom and industry of the people by the most oppressive and unwise regulations; by dividing them into different little states independent of each other; by grinding and destructive taxes; by absurd laws on commerce and manufactures; by

controlling the liberty of speech and writing; and by religious persecutions.

Sixth. Unjust, cruel, and invidious distinctions were made between different classes, by giving to one class a monopoly of the benefits, and an exemption from the burthens of the state. At the same time these distinctions, dearly purchased as they were, were of no advantage to the community, for they were only to be obtained by means of political corruption or worse vices.

Such being the faults of these governments, no sooner had the people become enlightened in any one of the nations which lived under them, than they asked for a reform. It was evident indeed to all sagacious minds long before the event happened, that it was impossible to allow the people to become instructed, without very great alterations in the administration of the state. There were but two ways open for preventing a collision between the people and their sovereign. The first was that adopted by the government of Spain, viz. to close all the avenues to knowledge, to bury the people in utter darkness, to prevent their discovering the nature of the prison in which they were confined. Of this expedient more hereafter. The second method was to reform in time; to grant what justice, honesty, and knowledge required, and refuse the rest.

The government of France adopted neither of these expedients. They let the great sea of opinion eat slowly into their foundations without raising a single barrier, or improving a single buttress. They allowed their people to run wild with the speculations of an author, who declared that " in this world the country of illusions was the only one fit to

live in." * They exhibited the worst vices of the most corrupt government to a people who had their brains on fire with romantic aspirations after virtue. They suffered the wave to approach unchecked, and before they could retreat it overwhelmed them.

The vengeance of the people followed close upon the vices of the court; the most profligate mistress of the most profligate monarch of France; she who had most degraded the throne and desecrated the altar, died on a scaffold in the throes of the Revolution.

That the abuses in the government of France created a necessity for a great change no man can doubt; but the passage from one kind of government to another is always attended with the greatest dangers. One reason for this is that there are two very different classes of men who are anxious promoters of reform in states; the one composed out of the best, the other out of the worst of a nation. The former class consists of men of ardent philanthrophy, of studious habits, of pure and simple manners, who in all the faults of a government see only the vice of institutions, and adopt with eager and dangerous facility the belief, that if laws were wise, mankind would be virtuous. Irreconcileable enemies to crime, they are always prepared to throw every reproach upon the rulers of the world, and to indulge the flattering dream, that if the seat of power were in the people at large, bad passions would never be allowed to have sway.

The second class consists of men of a far different description. All who in a low rank bear a malignant envy to their superiors; all who by a loose and profligate life have lost their

* Rousseau.

credit and their character; all who from a passion for excitement are in want of dreadful events and cruel revolutions to give them emotions, swell the ranks of this numerous body.* Men like these hate the superiority of virtue still more than that of birth and property, and are more dissatisfied with the prospect of a people remaining tranquil under reformed laws, and wise rulers, than with the sway of ancient abuses, and vicious tyrants. They come like furies upon the scenes of revolution, breathing discord and distrust into the bosoms of the people, who, awakened from their former slumbers, are at these times, too apt to see a tyrant in whoever aspires to conduct them. They mislead a nation in its way to improvement, and turn the rod of legislation to a serpent.

I know nothing that can justify the National Assembly of France in their proceedings. It is manifest that they exceeded their commission. They were sent to place checks upon the king; they began by taking the sovereign power to themselves; they were empowered to amend abuses, they destroyed the institutions on which they hung; they were entitled to demand a redress of grievances, they finished by creating as many evils as those which they subdued. Nay, they paved the way to greater injustice, more spoliation, more blood, more misery, than had existed under the old monarchy. It is true, the mischief they caused was temporary; that which they destroyed, permanent; and France has finally

* Madame Roland observes, that Robespierre had a kind of convulsive twitching of his fingers, the indication of a habit of indulging in violent excitement of nerves. One man takes opium, another drinks brandy, a third conquers the world, a fourth commits murder, a fifth leads a mob to blood and plunder, and all from the same constitutional temperament.

been a gainer by the change; but at how much less cost might she have obtained it!

Spain. The fate of Spain, different from that of France in many important circumstances, merits some reflection. I have said that the government of Spain pushed the theory of despotism to its furthest consequences, and prohibited knowledge with an intuitive instinct that knowledge was its worst enemy. But the remedy which excluded the disease killed the patient. All virtue, all activity, all industry, languished for want of excitement. The blast of the Inquisition, like the fire of Vesuvius, seized a people at their occupation, and fixed them for ever motionless, and lifeless to the place at which it found them. The Spaniards were stopped in their progress to civilization, and the beginning of the nineteenth century found them as little advanced in the arts of life as they had been at the end of the sixteenth. For industry can only be excited by the new wants of an improving people. And why should the Spaniards have new wants? After a certain period men only seek for riches to encrease their moral importance, or to augment their intellectual pleasures. The mere demands of animal life, and the greatness of barbarous hospitality are soon gratified. But in Spain the rich could have nothing beyond: they could not gain distinction, for at court they were nothing: they could not gain intellectual pleasures, for learning of all kinds was discouraged. Even the most pious authors, who endeavoured to promote by new writings the belief in the Christian religion, were persecuted by the Inquisition. In this general constraint, every thing languished; the earth was untilled, manufactures neglected; there were no canals, few roads passable for car-

riages, no political knowledge, no attempt at improvement. But worse than this, every thing like virtue was undermined in all but the very lowest orders by the corruption of a government despotic and feeble. Hence there was no strength in the armies, no vigour in the councils, no honesty among the aristocracy, no energy in the public mind of Spain. The armies of the French revolutionary government might easily have taken Madrid; a few years afterwards the nation suddenly found the troops of Napoleon in possession of the capital, and marching in all the interior of the country. How had this happened? The people had sunk into a lethargy, and were surprised naked and defenceless.

Thus it was proved, that if in France a despotic government was overthrown by the progress of knowledge, in Spain a despotic government destroyed itself by the exclusion of knowledge. A people that is instructed destroys its despotism; a despotism that prevents instruction ruins the people which obeys it. Thus in modern Europe either a nation shakes off arbitrary monarchy, or arbitrary monarchy wastes and consumes the independent existence of a nation.

New Law of Nations.

We have hitherto considered the monarchies of Europe only as their forms of government regarded the nations to which they belonged; we have now arrived at the period when these forms became the subject of the wars and treaties which took place between different nations. The total ruin of the French monarchy, which had so long been viewed as the most powerful, most splendid, and most stable government in Europe, spread alarm in the bosom of every sovereign, minister, and courtier, in the European states. The principal cabinets decided upon a new plan of action, and at

the same time opened a new source of war, which our grandsons may not live to see dried up. In a long exposition of their principles the Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia made the following declaration:

"The supreme authority in France being perpetual, and indivisible, the king could neither be deprived nor voluntarily divest himself of any of the prerogatives of royalty, because he is obliged to transmit them with his own crown to his successors."

"He could be dethroned only by an abdication." "The essential condition of the validity of such an act would be a full and entire liberty, which did not exist, and which it is perfectly notorious his most Christian Majesty never enjoyed."*

Such were the maxims of the law of nations, promulgated in 1792; maxims implying evidently that a king born to the inheritance of a despotic power, could neither of his own free will, nor by the desire and compulsion of his people, resign a tittle of his prerogative. But the sovereigns did not content themselves with merely proclaiming this doctrine, they sent their armies to act upon it. The manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick was in strict conformity with the theory of his masters; and death was threatened to all who adhered to the government of their own country, in preference to a monarch seated on the throne by a foreign enemy. Every one knows the fate of the Duke of Brunswick's army; the doctrine of the allies, which, if successful, would have subverted all law and liberty, was swept away along with it

* Manifesto issued by their Majesties the Emperor of Germany, and King of Prussia, August 4, 1792.

Unhappily, England joined, though doubtingly and tardily, in this crusade. She was influenced to do so by a great orator and great writer, who was not extremely unlike the apostle of the French revolution. For there are some points of resemblance between Rousseau and Burke. Both were men whose imagination outstripped their judgment; both had the faculty of dressing their thoughts in the most harmonious style ever employed in their respective languages. If Burke is more rich in imagery, Rousseau is more fraught with feeling; if Burke surprises and carries away by his splendid diction, Rousseau seems more natural, and has been more successful in contriving that art which does so much should appear to do nothing. Both Rousseau and Burke exalted the idols of their own fancy; Rousseau painted with brilliant colours an age of savage simplicity which in his sober hours he knew never had existed: Burke took for his favourite illusion the happiness of an age of chivalry, whose best features live only in romance. The one called upon the world in its manhood to regret that period of its infancy when arts were unknown, and the hides of wild beasts were the only covering for the body; the other endeavoured to restore and to preserve the remains of the dark and dismal times of the middle ages, when Europe was barbarous and miserable. Yet both these authors could call to their assistance the soundest maxims of reason; the most profound doctrines of philosophy: Rousseau availed himself of sentiments which nature inspires, and good sense approves; Burke combined with his most extravagant speculations, the most solemn decisions of law, and the practical lessons which a long contest for liberty had taught to an enlightened nation.

Rousseau and Burke.

Thus each had a people for his proselytes, I fear I must add, his victims. France, seduced by the visions of the Swiss philosopher, sunk into the most abominable vices in attempting to realize an unattainable pitch of virtue: England, rouzing at the trumpet of the Irish orator, made war upon a neighbouring country, because their people had become too frantic and too wicked to be amicably treated with. Thus, at the close of the eighteenth century, when the oracles of Delphi were laughed at, the leaves of the Sybil considered fabulous, and our rude ancestors despised for following the call of Peter the Hermit; death and havoc made their harvest in every quarter of the world, because the two most enlightened nations of Europe abandoned themselves to the guidance of two splendid enthusiasts, of whom the one was evidently insane, and the other totally wanting in sound discretion.

I must now pass over an eventful period. The war between the revolution and the old monarchies, after lasting a few years, suddenly changed its shape, and became a contest between one man at the head of France, and the rest of Europe, led by England. For twenty years, Napoleon Bonaparte made the destiny of the civilized world. His life will stand in history, like an isthmus between two great ages, and not less memorable than either of them. The great genius of this extraordinary man was sufficient, in his time, to occupy the political mind of Europe; to assist or oppose his projects was the occupation of the bravest hearts, the wisest heads, of all the states of Europe. Now that he has been withdrawn, every state is busy with its own peculiar constitution, and every individual is at work on his own peculiar project, or his own special aggrandizement.

The pacification of Vienna, was not likely long to arrest the tide of reform which was setting in rapidly upon Europe. Founded upon the narrowest basis of the interests of each particular sovereign, it seemed rather a compact of a few feudal lords transferring their slaves, than the long promised deliverance of Europe, effected by mighty sovereigns. The monarchs, and their ministers, seemed to imagine that they had got rid of the people, and popular revolutions for ever, and had nothing more to do than to divide the spoil. They distributed among themselves territories and towns, and the souls of men, as if it were so much gold and silver which they had captured as lawful plunder.

So far as France was concerned, their calculation seemed to be justified, and the people of that country submitted quietly to the government imposed upon them. The revolutions of Spain and Naples, however, rouzed the Allied Monarchs from their stupor, and obliged them to disclose their real intentions towards the people of Europe. These are to be gathered from their declarations with regard to Spain and Naples; the latter, especially, being a weak power, they did not hesitate to disclose at once all their sentiments towards her.

The following then may be stated as the principal articles of the new law of nations.

1. " The monarchical principle rejects every institution which is not determined upon, and accomplished by the monarch himself of his own free will."*

2. The Allied Powers " exercise an undoubted right when they consider of measures of precaution against states in

* Berlin Court Gazette, official paragraph. Dec. 19, 1820.

which the overthrow of the government effected by rebellion, even considered as an example, must give occasion to a hostile attitude."*

3. The powers have a right of declaring " a spirit of discontent and bitterness, dispositions hostile to their government, and a passionate desire of political innovation," existing " amidst all classes of people," in a foreign nation, to be the work of " a sect working in the dark," the changes which result from it, " a revolt;" and institutions sanctioned by a national parliament to be " no less in contradiction to the character than to the wants" of that foreign nation.†

4. The powers have a right " to put an end by a common effort to the result of such changes." ‡

While the sovereigns put forth this new system of international law, they at the same time declared they were friendly to the introduction, in a legal manner, of " institutions conformable to the progress of civilization and the wants of the age." § The whole of their doctrine, however, with respect to the legal manner of introducing new institutions, is contained in the last circular dispatch, dated from Laybach, and expressed in a manner which, if not clear, is yet intelligible. After describing the revolution at Naples, the sovereigns proceed to say:—

" The Allied Sovereigns could not fail to perceive that there was only one barrier to oppose to this devastating torrent. To preserve what is legally established—such was,

* Circular Note of the Courts of Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Dec. 8, 1820.

† Austrian Declaration against Naples. Feb. 1821. ‡ Ibid.

§ Memorial addressed to all the Ministers of Russia, on the subject of the affairs of Spain, 1820.

as it ought to be, the invariable principle of their policy, the point of departure, and the final object of all their resolutions. They were not to be deterred from their purpose by the vain clamours of ignorance or malice, accusing them of condemning humanity to a state of stagnation and torpor, incompatible with its natural and progressive march, and with the perfecting of social institutions. Never have these Monarchs manifested the least disposition to thwart real improvements, or the reform of abuses which creep into the best governments. Very different views have constantly animated them; and if this repose, which governments and nations were justified in supposing secured by the pacification of Europe, has not operated all the good which might have been expected to result from it, it is because governments have been compelled to concentrate all their energies in the means of opposing bounds to the progress of a faction, which, disseminating everywhere error, discontent, and a fanaticism for innovation, would soon have rendered the existence of any public order whatever problematical. Useful or necessary changes in legislation, and in the administration of states, ought only to emanate from the free will and the intelligent and well-weighed conviction of those whom God has rendered responsible for power. All that deviates from this line necessarily leads to disorder, commotions, and evils far more insufferable than those which it is pretended to remedy. Penetrated with this eternal truth, the sovereigns have not hesitated to proclaim it with frankness and vigour; they have declared that, in respecting the rights and independence of all legitimate power, they regarded as legally null, and as disavowed by the principles which constitute the public law

of Europe, all pretended reform brought about by revolt and open hostility."

Before I proceed to examine the new code, it may be well to mention, that the Diet of Frankfort, consisting of ministers from all Germany, the peculiar land of the law of nations, made a voluntary declaration respecting this last paper, " that they were of one mind in revering in all its parts the beautiful monument of their equity and love of order, which these sovereigns have erected for the permanent consolation of all well-intentioned men." Surely it is time to examine closely the scope of a practical doctrine promulgated by sovereigns who command a million of armed men, and approved of by the representatives of the jurists of Europe.

In the first place then, it is the evident tendency of this new law of nations, to prevent the improvement of mankind precisely where that improvement is most required. We have seen that kings, if entrusted with an unlimited prerogative, are liable to a more than common share of human error and weakness. But on a par with their ignorance and debasement will be their resistance to rational innovation; and thus as a direct corollary from the new code, it follows that a king will retain his absolute power in proportion to his unfitness to exercise it, and that he is to have at his disposal the lives and properties of millions of human beings, simply because he is incapable of conducting a good government, and totally deprived of the knowledge, benevolence, and vigour necessary to reform a bad one.

It is manifest, then, that however averse the sovereigns may be to " thwart real improvements," such improvements cannot to any great extent take place unless by miracle

from the mere motion of the monarch. A better instance cannot be given of this than Spain, where, during the last century, many able men have been called to the head of affairs, and yet, from the inveterate corruption of the court, and the patient submission of the people, no real improvement was made in the government.

What is called the monarchical principle therefore is, an expedient for closing all bright prospects of improvement to the human race, a provision for perpetual despotism, a law for eternal ignorance, a decree on the part of the sovereigns of Europe to prevent all hope of redemption from the rule of tyranny, bigotry, and vice. It can be compared to nothing but the vision of the genius of the Stormy Cape supposed to have appeared to the adventurous *Vasco di Gama,* and forbidden, with dreadful menaces, all further progress in the discovery of new seas, and the unclosing of new prospects to mankind.

To prevent, however, so disastrous a result, Alexander, Emperor of Russia, proposes his own personal mediation. In a state-paper given to the world his Imperial Majesty is pleased to assure the Spaniards, that "the correspondence which has taken place between the different Courts of Europe, attests the wish which the Emperor has always formed, that the authority of the King (of Spain) might be consolidated in both hemispheres, through the medium of pure and generous principles, and, with the support of vigorous institutions, rendered still more vigorous by the regular mode of their establishment. Institutions which emanate from thrones are conservatory; but if they spring up amidst troubles, they only engender a new chaos."*

* Note of the Imperial Russian Ministry to the Resident Spanish Minister at St. Petersburgh, May 2, 1820.

Laying aside the manifest absurdity of the historical maxim, contained in the last sentence, how weak and inefficient is this method of reforming the "abuses which creep into the best governments!" How is a sovereign at St. Petersburg to know the grievances and wants of the Spanish people? How is he to know where the administration of Spanish justice is defective, and what is the appropriate remedy? How is he to adjust the time and the circumstances, the propitious moment, and the due quantity of reform? But even if he should be endowed with this supernatural knowledge, what obliges the King of Spain to listen to him? May he not say "these laws appear to you to be bad, but I, who know my people, am convinced that they suit them perfectly. Try your reforms at home before you prescribe them to others." What could an Emperor of Russia reply?

Nor is this all. While the Emperor of Russia was in favour of pure and generous principles, the correspondence of Austria, at the same period, attested wishes of a totally opposite description. Prince Metternich is the author of a well known letter to Baron Berstett, in which he complains that some German princes had acted with too much precipitation in giving their people constitutions, and he advises a stedfast adherence to what is established, not only as a means of preventing farther innovation, but as a means of recovering what had been lost. To the same purpose is the Austrian treaty of 1815, with Naples, stipulating that the king should not introduce institutions at variance with the principles by which Austria governs Lombardy, namely, the principles of pure despotism. Who then can hope for the introduction of rational freedom from the interference of the allied sovereigns?

While the means proposed by the sovereigns are thus in-

efficient for the purpose of promoting improvement, they are mighty and almost irresistible for the purpose of preventing it. If a people worn out by suffering, at length rise against their rulers, and demand a constitution in the only way it can be demanded with effect, *videlicet*, in arms, the allied monarchs have a million of troops ready to restore despotic authority. The troops of the three great combined powers are always prepared to march to the assistance of any despotic monarch who may have lost his power by cruelty, or bigotry, or vice.

Let us now pass to the consequences that flow from the adoption of principles so absurd and tyrannical. They are, as might have been expected, in contradiction to the maxims of common sense, dangerous to the repose of Europe, hostile to the rights of nations, and lead directly to a general confusion of all interests, laws, principles, and securities. A nation is to be incapable of deciding for itself upon its own grievances and wants. A sovereign at a thousand miles distance is to pronounce an infallible judgment upon them. A congress is to be held in Moravia or Carinthia or Lombardy, to discuss what are the best remedies for the abuses of power at Naples or Madrid. Three absolute sovereigns are to decide infallibly on the various forms and regulations of free government. The cabinets of Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Berlin, are to be entitled to judge, without appeal, of the real sentiments of the people at Genoa and Cadiz. Armies of Croats and Cossacks are to be marched from the most savage parts of the globe, to reform civilized nations, and put down in all extremities of Europe the example of revolution *effected by military force*. Excommunication, forfeiture, servitude, and

proscription, are the penalties to be pronounced against legislative assemblies which do not conform in their political institutions to the standard of Muscovy, Brandenburgh, and Bohemia.

It is impossible to say how far such a doctrine as this may be carried. The present sovereigns of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, are not immortal. It is quite uncertain whether their successors may not have still more extravagant notions of the omnipotence of legitimate monarchy, and the duty of passive obedience; but with the example of their progenitors before them, they can entertain no doubt of the justice of forcing their opinions on other nations at the point of the bayonet. Nations, on the other hand, desirous of becoming, or remaining free, will find that they have no chance of success unless they can excite the subjects of despotic monarchs to ask at the same time for liberal institutions. Their only hope of remaining in peace at home will be to excite insurrection abroad. Thus the whole family of Europe will be engaged in a dreadful species of hostilities, marked with all the calamities of civil war. Blood will flow not only in the field, but on the scaffold, and the victorious party will join the insolence of a foreign enemy, to the rancour of a domestic faction.

Such is the melancholy prospect which the mistaken policy of the allies opens to Europe. They are about to renew the scenes of horror with which the bigotry of Philip the IInd and Charles the IXth afflicted mankind during the progress of the Reformation.

The dreadful nature of this struggle, the miseries with which it must be attended in its progress, and the scars

which it is sure to leave upon the nations engaged in it, are to me subjects of very sensible pain, and I think it would give every humane man the highest satisfaction if any mean might be found with which both parties would be satisfied. It seems to me to be of no light importance, in order to forward so desirable an end, to set before the extremes of each party, the impracticability of the objects for which they are contending.

With this view, let us first turn our attention to those who seek to establish a pure democracy in their own and other countries; to lodge the whole power of the state in a single order of society, and to treat the king and the aristocracy as the servants of the commonalty, partaking in none of the authority, and existing only by the sufferance of the legislative body. Let those who are animated with such designs look fairly and calmly at the difficulties with which they will have to contend; the risks to which they expose the cause of freedom at every step they take; the blood they must shed, and the havoc they must make in their course; the necessity of trusting the interests of liberty to the fate of arms, and the danger of so exposing it, in the case either of victory or defeat; the uncertain tenure by which they will hold their power when established; and above all, let them reflect upon the experience of the last thirty years, teeming with astonishing events, and every event a lesson. The government of the states of modern Europe, as I have already said, and repeated, rests upon property; the love of enjoying, the fear of losing, an estate, is the main principle of action with all who have an estate to keep or to lose. A democratic revolution cuts across the grain of this pervading principle; the well-known instability of a single popular assembly makes every

man tremble for his fortune, and the welfare of his family. Hence all the old nobility, and all proprietors of every degree, are the enemies of a democratic form of government; hence they join in the intrigues of displaced courtiers, and even in the aggressions of a foreign army. There remains no way of averting or blunting the edge of their hostility, but death and confiscation; the scaffold and the alms-house. But what means are these for philanthrophic reformers to employ! To slay thousands! To beggar millions! not merely to take political power, and the means of advancement from the hands of one set of men to put them into those of another, but to tear up society by the roots! To destroy the domestic life, the future prospects, the entwined connexions of numbers of innocent beings, remote from every political intrigue, and asking only to breathe in order to be happy! Is all this nothing? Is it nothing to wrench asunder ties that cannot be renewed; to cut away habits that cannot be replaced; to banish the most civilized of a civilized community, and to raise the dregs of society to a place which they can only trouble by their impurity? Is it nothing to tear apart all the endearing dependencies, the grateful bonds that unite the highest with the lowest, and to strike a blow that, in throwing down the palace, equally robs of subsistence the prince in the hall and the poor at the gate? Is it a trifling matter to ruin the happiness of one whole generation? To set tenant against landlord, servant against master, to spread the havoc of war not only over the fields and the houses, but in the thoughts and the hearts of every family of a great community?

And after all, what is gained by such an experiment? The book of history is open to reply to the question; we

may there read, that although a large town may have given force to a democracy for a time, the weight of property has never allowed it to be established in the principal countries of Europe. The republics of modern Italy had only a small territory, totally dependent upon, though often extremely hostile to, the government of the capital; the towns of Rome, Naples, and Leyden, adopted democracy at particular periods, but were utterly unable or unwilling to maintain it. The Wat Tylers and Jack Cades of England, the Stephen Marcels and the Jacquerie of France, the Cola Rienzi's, and Masaniello's of Italy, were short-lived, and eminently unsuccessful. If we come to later times, we may read, that after Charles the Ist had been destroyed, the chief leaders of the republican government, with the able and sagacious Whitelocke among them, called upon Cromwell to assume the title of king, as the best means of remedying the disorders of the state; and this he would certainly have done, had not a part of the army revolted, and made him fear that they might follow other leaders. But what have we not witnessed in France in our own day? After the most complete and apparently successful overthrow of every thing that belonged to royalty and aristocracy, have we not seen Napoleon Bonaparte, a Corsican officer of artillery, seize the sceptre by the desire of all parties, without conspiracy, without murmurs, and rather with the joy that attends a lawful king when he takes possession of his inheritance, than with the bloody struggle that usually paves the way for an usurper? Have we not seen this child of the revolution build up a throne with the very stones that supported the old dynasty, proclaim from the capital of the French republic all

the doctrines of arbitrary monarchy, and teach in the name of an ancient sovereign the kingly maxim that "every thing must be done *for* the people, but nothing *by* the people?"

Do these things convey no lesson? Do they contain no moral? Do they not teach that it is almost impossible to establish in the old kingdoms of modern Europe the government of Athens? Do they not enforce more and more the great truth, that the interests of property, and the necessity of giving a place to aristocracy will overthrow every constitution which pretends to act by the mere unbalanced will of the people? But let us hear the opinion of a great man, whom I have just mentioned, as brilliantly expressed as it is profoundly conceived. "To make a constitution in a country which should have no kind of aristocracy, would be attempting to navigate in a single element. The French revolution undertook a problem as insoluble as that of giving a direction to balloons."*

On the other hand what do the agents of the old arbitrary monarchies propose to themselves by their obstinate resistance to the spirit, the sense, and knowledge of the age? Do they believe they can stop the progress of man towards civilization? That they can debar the people of Europe from representative governments and a free press, any more than they can conceal from them a knowledge of gas-lights, stage-coaches, and cheap cottons? Do they suppose that any inquisition which the humanity of this age will bear can prevent the ardent youth of the present generation from reading Locke, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau? But even this would be insufficient; they must prohibit Plato,

* Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France sous Napoléon écrits à St. Hélène sous la dictée de l'Empereur, t. i. p. 145.

Demosthenes, Thucydides, Cicero, and Livy. They must make brave men, cowards; learned men, ignorant; active men, indolent; honest men, knaves; before they can hope to succeed in the task of giving to baseness, ignorance, imbecility, and depravity, the government of the rest of mankind. They must annihilate England, cut off all intercourse with America, and obliterate history itself before they can finally and completely succeed. But this is impossible. Men are not now to be debarred from reading and thinking; and wherever there is a man who reads, and thinks, there they will have an enemy. Wherever there is a society, or a club, called by whatever name, and for whatever purpose brought together, there they will find a band of adversaries. Warned by their common danger, the friends of knowledge, of humanity, and of freedom, will unite together, and recognise each other by the signs of their common feeling for the dignity of human nature. At the approach of a danger which menaces to swallow up all we have, and all we hope for in this world, the prudent will become enterprising; the tranquil will be agitated; the moderate impetuous; the loyal, rebels. Sooner than allow the dark ages to return, thousands, and tens of thousands are ready to sacrifice their lives with joy. They will ask for no peace but accompanied with freedom. They will watch by night and fight by day. They will organize resistance in their convivial meetings, and make conspiracy their profession and their pleasure. The sympathies of good men will fill their magazines with arms, and the renown of having saved their country from slavery, will be the only honours and titles to which they will aspire. What shall withstand men to whom freedom shall make victory

doubly dear, and the love of glory shall render death indifferent?

But even if the contest should end as the wars of the Reformation ended by the triumph of one party in some countries and of the other in others, what will the sovereigns who shall have preserved their arbitrary power have gained? The countries where reform triumphs will have the advantage which England and Holland in the seventeenth century had over Spain and Italy. Success in excluding what are called revolutionary doctrines will be accompanied by the loss of national strength and national importance. The nations which are not sufficiently enlightened to admit freedom into their government, or too corrupt to check the abuses which despotism has engendered, must be contented to sit on a lower form among the powers of Europe. It was by succeeding in all their objects, by repressing innovation, by extirpating opposition, that the government of Spain effected the ruin of their country, and reduced that mighty empire to poverty and insignificance. In the same way the ministers of the despotic states of Europe, in preserving absolute power to their masters, are preparing the cup of bitterness to the nations they misgovern.

The truth is, that as violence and massacre do not forward the true interests of a people, so neither do proscription and ignorance enter into the true policy of sovereigns. The sovereign of a free people has the advantage of knowing his subjects; no one will dare to impose upon him false statements; facts and capacities lie open before him. The persons who have a real interest in supporting despotism are the ministers of that despotism; agents who would be dismissed for their ignorance,

and frivolity by an enlightened sovereign, punished for their rapacity and dishonesty by a free people. These are the men who pour poison into the ear of kings, and teach them that they must make themselves the heads of an offensive and defensive alliance against their subjects. It is for their interests and not for those of the sovereigns themselves that ignorance and slavery are perpetuated. The sovereigns themselves have already acknowledged the power of public opinion; the proof of it is that there never was at any period in the history of Europe so few personal vices, so little cruelty, so little profligacy, to be found among its emperors and kings. Many of them would do honour to any station of life. But their ministers, sprung generally from a debased aristocracy, and infected by all its turpitudes, naturally hate freedom as they hate the light which would expose their deformity. "Indeed," says Milton "none can love freedom heartily but good men: the rest love not freedom but license; which never hath more scope or more indulgence than under tyrants. Hence it is that tyrants are not oft offended, nor stand much in doubt of bad men, as being all naturally servile; but in whom virtue and true worth most is eminent, them they fear in earnest, as by right their masters; against them lies all their hatred and suspicion. Consequently neither do bad men hate tyrants, but have been always readiest with the falsified names of loyalty and obedience to colour over their base compliances."

These words deserve to be studied by every king, and by every subject. Here both may see that in the mind of this great and good man the license that springs from democratic excess, and that which arises from royal misrule, are placed

in the same class; both favour the vices of the bad, both are inimical to the virtues of the true lover of freedom.

The true policy then both of sovereigns and subjects is to embrace liberty but drive away license; to treat together on the grounds of amity, confidence, and love, on the one side; respect, moderation, and justice on the other. Let not the friends of liberty seek to establish schemes of government that never can last, let not kings endeavour to maintain barbarous systems that are for ever gone by.

I might here conclude, but that I wish to notice two objections which often weigh in the minds of good men against the establishment of liberty in countries now barbarous or debased.

We are perpetually asked if the nations at present declaring their independence, or reforming their institutions, are fit to be free. It would be lamentable indeed if this plea were to be allowed to prevail in bar to the generous efforts of countries long oppressed by tyranny. It would indeed be a hopeless case for mankind if despotism were thus allowed to take advantage of its own wrong, and to bring the evidence of its crimes as the title-deeds of its right. It would be indeed a strange perversion of justice if absolute governments might say, "Look how ignorant, base, false, and cruel, our people have become under our sway; therefore we have a right to retain them in eternal subjection, and everlasting slavery." But no. When I am asked if such or such a nation is fit to be free, I ask in return, Is any man fit to be a despot? The answer must be; None whatever, neither Mussulman, nor Christian, neither in Greece nor in Columbia. It is the proved effect of despotism, that wherever her horrid head appears she creates the

evils she affects to deplore. And although those who first shake off the chain may bear upon their frame the marks of the degrading links, yet these impressions will wear out, and the first fury of the released captive once over, the vengeance of a slave will give way to the virtues of a freeman.

Again, we are told that it is desirable indeed to reform the absolute monarchies of Europe, but that revolutions are accompanied by acts of violence and outrage. To be sure they are; but on whom lies the blame of their excesses? Upon those who have risen in arms for liberty, but have not been able to restrain the violence of a people suddenly delivered from intolerable restraint, or upon those who have gone on from year to year and from day to day adding to the cruel injuries they inflicted upon the most numerous classes of a nation, and sustaining by force the monstrous acts of injustice which they perpretated from wantonness and caprice? On those who have long and patiently borne what no man ought to inflict; or on those who have inflicted what no man ought to suffer? On those who desire the improvement and happiness of mankind, or on those who set up the image of insolent rapacity, and call it a government? Undoubtedly upon the heads of those who provoke a people to rebellion must fall the crimes of that rebellion; he who gives an example of cruelty and injustice must not complain if it rebounds upon himself.

Let it be observed, moreover, that the excesses of a people in revolution are marked down, and magnified; they spread indefinite alarm at the time, and are recorded to future ages. The crimes of despotism, on the other hand, are the greater part of them performed in darkness; the same hand which

takes the life of the patriot, arrests the pen of the historian. The surface of despotism is smooth; the world knows not how many victims are languishing in its prisons, or how many of its subjects are swept away by its unjust decrees. Thousands of human beings may have sacrificed their lives to the fears of a tyrant, and no one have known it; let a revolution take place, and a convicted conspirator suffer without the forms of law, the whole world resounds with complaint and indignation.

Let the friends of freedom, however, endeavour as much as is in their power to curb the vengeance of the people. Let their magnanimity be worthy of the great cause of which they are the defenders. I fear, however, that now the contest is begun, the wise and the good can no longer arrest its fury. It is fortunate for the philanthropist who can weave dreams of universal peace, the offspring of universal freedom! My eyes can perceive no such visions. I trust that a happier æra is preparing for Europe than any that she has seen since the rise of the Roman Empire, but I anticipate with sad certainty, that the contests now carrying on will display to the end a due proportion of those crimes and vices to the recording pen of history, and the reflective observation of philosophy, that seem to be the inseparable companions of aspiring and imperfect man.

END OF THE INTRODUCTION.

MEMOIRS

OF

THE AFFAIRS OF EUROPE,

FROM THE PEACE OF UTRECHT.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

State of France after the Peace of Utrecht. Disputes of the Jansenists and Jesuits. Will of Lewis the XIVth. His Death. His Character.

THE period of which I am about to treat, is not one of those remarkable æras, signalized by bloody wars, or sudden revolutions, by great national changes, or moving feats of individual heroism. It is a time which, to the superficial observer, may appear stagnant and uninteresting, abounding with petty intrigues, rather than general contests, and affording more examples of the cautious and pacific temper which provides for the happiness of existing generations, than of the boldness and enterprize which administer food to history. Yet in this tame and tranquil age, are to be found events and circumstances, over which a political observer may meditate not without advantage. He may mark the means by which a new dynasty was consolidated, and an ancient throne undermined; he may trace in one country the slow suicide of arbitrary power, in another the firm growth of rational freedom; and if the ordinary reader regret the absence of those black crimes and bright virtues, which give to true narrative the interest of fiction, he who seeks for improvement in the study of past ages, will find no period more pregnant with examples of wisdom to imitate, of folly to avoid, and of vice to loathe.

Foreign Affairs.

The peace of Utrecht put an end to the miseries of war in

Europe, and, to use the expression of the Duke of Saint Simon, saved France. Lewis the Fourteenth had no longer to dread the presence of an enemy in his capital, or the cruel alternative of being obliged to dethrone his grandson by his own arms.

The foreign affairs of his reign, after this time, may be comprized in a few words. In order to evade the stipulations of the treaty with England, which compelled him to fill up the port of Dunkirk, he made a canal at Mardyke, and persisted in continuing the work in spite of all remonstrance.* When Queen Anne died, Lewis with a perseverance, which does more honour to his spirit than his good faith, endeavoured to promote the views of the Pretender. All he was able to effect, however, amounted to no more than obtaining a loan of 400,000 crowns from the King of Spain, which helped to furnish means for the rebellion of 1715. Before the issue was known, the King of France was no more.

State of France.

If the short remainder of his life passed without foreign war, Lewis had sufficient matter for anxiety in the state of his country, his court, and family. The nation was utterly exhausted by the expenses of a ruinous war, and depressed

* It has been said that when Lord Stair remonstrated on this subject, Lewis replied "M. l'Ambassadeur j'ai toujours été le maître chez moi, souvent chez les autres, ne m'en faites pas souvenir." Voltaire denies credit to this anecdote, on the authority of M. de Torcy, who said he was always present when the King saw Lord Stair, and could recollect nothing of it. On the other hand, the story is told by Duclos, who had good opportunities of knowing, and who adds, that Lord Stair, on telling the story observed, "La vieille machine m'impose." But Lord Stair's Journal, published in the Hardwicke Papers, does not mention any audience that he had with Lewis the Fourteenth on this, or indeed any other subject after his first presentation at court, and thus confirms Voltaire.

by the misfortunes which had happened in the course of it. The miseries of the people formed a striking and sad contrast to the magnificence of the court. The war had been marked by the falling off of the revenue, the distress of the merchant, and the grinding of the poor, while the nobility and the clergy exempt from nearly all the taxes, left the greater burden to be supported by the industrious classes of the community. Recruits for the army were conducted to the frontier chained together like malefactors.* Many of these evils were destined to be aggravated by peace. An attempt made by Desmaréts, minister of finance, to restore the currency, (which had been depreciated about thirty per cent.) to its original value, greatly increased the embarrassments of industry, and the misery of the community.

English travellers who visited France, found nothing but beggary and rags: deserted towns, ruined houses, and an impoverished people.† The Duke of Argyle declared in the English House of Lords, that he had traversed France, and had never seen a country so exhausted both of men and money; he affirmed, that for forty miles together he had not seen a man capable of bearing arms.

Two years after the conclusion of the Treaty of Utrecht, none of the benefits of peace had been perceived; the nation bore their distress with patience, but their apathy was, in the eyes of many, a presage of the decline of the kingdom.‡

If the Court exhibited an appearance of splendour little in conformity to the state of the people, it, at the same time, The Court.

* Duclos, t. i. † Guardian, No. 102.

‡ Forbonnais Recherches et Considérations sur les Finances de France, tom. v. p. 64.

formed a melancholy contrast to its former self. While the outward trappings, the hours and the attendance, the journeys and the homage, remained the same, the spirit which had animated Versailles in days of glory was utterly departed. The palace, and its precincts no longer displayed to the admiring eyes of natives and of foreigners, a king elate with pride, which his success seemed to justify; a numerous and splendid family, and a glorious train of followers, where Condé and Turenne, Bossuet and Fenelon, Racine and Boileau, might be distinguished in a crowd of illustrious courtiers; the brilliant elements of a society where a magnificent sovereign presided, and where Montespan and Sevigné added the lustre of beauty and wit, to the celebrity of arms and letters. Now all was changed: Lewis, deprived in his old age of his son and his grand-children, and shorn of the fame which attended his former wars, divided his time and his power between a clandestine queen and a bigotted confessor. The pomp of the Court ceremonies seemed like wedding dresses upon bodies about to be consigned to their graves; Madame de Maintenon herself was gloomy and unhappy—"I am old," she writes, "sad, and weary of the "world. I am nothing but a living skeleton. I can scarcely "see; I hear still worse; I am not myself understood, for my "pronunciation is gone with my teeth; my memory begins "to fail, and our misfortunes, joined to my age, make me cry "like all other old women." In the palace, nothing seemed to be attended to but a continual and minute devotion; even that was hollow and affected: nothing was real but weariness, disgust, and misery.

In the midst of this general gloom, occasioned by the

public and private misfortunes, as well as the declining age, and bigotted superstition of the king, there were two causes which contributed to give a deeper hue to the melancholy of Lewis. The first of these was the contest subsisting between the Jesuits and Jansenists; a question which had occupied with serious, or rather ridiculous disputes, the early part of the reign of Lewis.

Jesuits and Jansenists.

There are some questions so concealed in the shades of metaphysics, that the wit of man has never yet been able to throw upon them a clear and indisputable light. Like objects seen in a dream, they deceive the mind; and when we imagine that we have grasped them, we find nothing in our heads but images, to which we endeavour in vain to affix an accurate and intelligible shape. Ages pass without approaching nearer to their solution; generations of men of the highest intellect leave them obscure and unsatisfactory as they found them. Such subjects would seem to be reserved for another state of being, and only opened in part, in order to confound the pride of human understanding, and check the presumption of all-daring science. Of this kind is the problem of liberty and necessity; which, after all that has been said and written, has been left by the wisest metaphysicians to be decided by the internal feeling given us by nature, that we are responsible beings; and however controlled by circumstances, have it always in our own power to avoid the consciousness of crime. This great question, so long a subject of dispute in the schools, did not begin to disturb the church of Christ till the commencement of the fifth century; when a monk of the name of Morgan went from Great Britain to the East, and entered into a controversy with a zealot, newly converted from the Manichæan heresy. From this time the

partisans of the monk, whose name, turned into Greek, became Pelagius, and of the convert, who was the celebrated St. Augustine, divided the christian world: the names of Molina, the Spanish Jesuit, of the Arminians in Holland, of Jansen, Bishop of Yprès, are familiar to all the readers of modern history. In France the heat of the quarrel seemed to abate, when in the beginning of the year 1709 died Père la Chaise, who had for five and thirty years filled the important post of confessor to the King. The revocation of the edict of Nantz, and subsequent persecution of the Protestants, disgrace the period of his spiritual direction; but he was not the chief mover of those measures; and it could hardly be expected that a member of the order of Jesuits should oppose them. In the affair of the Jansenists, and all other religious questions, he had shewn himself singularly mild; indeed his faith in religion was of that easy kind denounced by Pascal, which tolerates every opinion, provided it does not brave the church, and winks at every sin, so long as it wears the cloak of decency, and does not deny the healing power of confession and absolution. "You are too indulgent," Lewis frequently said to him. "No," answered the reverend father, "it "is not I who am too indulgent, but you who are too harsh." It is reported, that when he was dying, he thus addressed the King, "Sire, I beg of you as a favour to choose my suc- "cessor from our body. It is much attached to your ma- "jesty; but it is very numerous, and composed of men of "different characters, all zealous for the glory of the society. "In a time of misfortune there is no answering for them, and "a single blow is soon struck."*

The King, whether influenced or not by this singular

* Duclos, Mémoires Secrets, t. i. p. 141.

speech, which had more the air of a menace than a request, desired to have three Jesuits deputed to him, out of whom he might choose his future confessor. When they were shewn into his presence, one of them kept behind his companions, with his eyes fixed on the ground, his hands clenched together, and his countenance appearing neither abashed by the presence in which he stood, nor transported by the hopes which his situation might have inspired. But the more he seemed unmindful of others, the more deeply he fixed the attention of the King, who presently named him to the vacant post. A more sinister choice could not have been made. When the King heard that his name was Le Tellier, he asked him if he was a relation of Tellier de Louvois? he answered, "I, Sire! I am but the son of a poor peasant, and have neither "relations nor friends." There are men, of whom it may be said, that it would be well for the world if they were vain or licentious. The exemption from ordinary weaknesses is in some characters an indication that the soul is occupied with darker vices. Thus it was with Father le Tellier. The son of an attorney in Normandy, he was eminent for his pride, presumption, and malignity: he was unsocial in his habits, unchanging in his objects, indefatigable in his pursuit of them. Full of the spirit of persecution, reinforced and aggravated by a narrow but vigorous zeal for the order to which he belonged, he soon obtained a mastery over the mind of a declining King, who no longer capable of enjoyment in this world, was preparing his plea for the next, by gloomy piety and uncharitable orthodoxy. At the time when Le Tellier thus became possessed of the most important ministry in France, the only one of which Lewis was not jealous, and in

which he did not think his own opinion better than that of his adviser, the name of Jesuit had suffered some diminution of its glory. With their usual policy, the Jesuit missionaries of China had complied, in many respects, with the superstitious practices of the natives, in order to obtain an ascendency over their minds: this condescension had been represented in the most odious colours by their enemies, and the Court of Rome had lent a favourable ear to the accusation. A book of Le Tellier himself, on the Chinese Ceremonies, had been condemned by the Papal tribunal at the instigation of the Jansenists. Thus the new confessor was impelled at once by bigotry as a monk, zeal for the glory of his company as a Jesuit, and revenge for his sufferings as an author, to punish the heterodox, but still formidable sect.

Port Royal.

One of the first acts of the reign of Le Tellier was the destruction of the monastery of Port Royal. This celebrated school of learning and piety had produced, and nurtured the chief enemies of the Jesuits. The three Arnauds, Nicole, Lemaitre de Saci, Pascal, the author of the admirable Provincial Letters, and many other men eminent in literature, as well as theology, had issued from this place, and edified the world, no less by the sanctity of their lives, than by the depth of their knowledge, and the vigour of their reasoning. The nuns of the society followed the doctrines of these able masters. After many disputes an order was obtained from the King for the demolition of the convent: every precaution was taken to provide against resistance on the part of the nuns. In the dead of the night, a detachment of French and Swiss guards surrounded the habitation of the sleeping community. In the morning d'Argenson, chief of the police, arrived with a body

of patrole and archers, ordered the door to be opened, displayed a *lettre de cachet* to the assembled convent, and gave them, like a victorious general, only a quarter of an hour's delay. The nuns were hurried into separate carriages, each carriage attended by a guard of archers, like a body of conspirators, and they were conveyed to different convents, some to twenty, some fifty, some to an hundred miles distance. The old women being thus secured without any loss to the besiegers, the convent was soon afterwards levelled to the ground, the bodies of the dead were disinterred and removed, and the plough passed over the spot. Thus did the troops of his most Christian Majesty achieve the conquest of a convent, and crush the rebellion of a polemical sisterhood !*

Under the vigorous administration of Le Tellier, the church was soon agitated by a new subject. The Jesuits, finding that the practices of their missionaries in China excited much clamour against them, bethought themselves of diverting the storm in some other direction. They fixed upon a book called the "*Reflections Morales sur le nouveau Testament du Père Quesnel.*" This book had been published forty years, latterly with the approbation of the Cardinal de Noailles, and was so much esteemed by the Père La Chaise, that he always kept it on his table, saying, that as he had not time to read much, he was glad to have a book that was a mine of doctrine and exemplary piety. Even the Pope had said to a person who visited him, "Here is an excellent book: we have no body at Rome capable of writing like this. I should be glad to invite the author near me."† This book, however, of uncontradicted reputation, and Quesnel.

* St. Simon, iii. p. 244. † Voltaire, Siècle de L. XIV. Jansenisme.

approved morality, was destined to fall before the arms of the Jesuits. At their earnest solicitation, the Pope issued what was called the constitution, or Bull Unigenitus, the fruitful and never-failing source of schism, of passion, and of party, till the Revolution absorbed all other subjects of dispute. By this constitution, issued in 1713, the Head of the Romish Church declared that there were an hundred and one heretical propositions in the book of Père Quesnel. Among the propositions so condemned, was the following: "The fear "of an unjust excommunication ought never to deter us from "doing our duty." If this sentiment be not a just one, it is evident that all Catholic kings are at the mercy of the Pope; yet so inconsistent is human nature, that Lewis the Fourteenth, the king of all others the most jealous of his authority, used the whole influence of his crown to obtain a condemnation of it from a reluctant and unambitious Pope. A curious anecdote is told relative to this bull. Amelot, Minister of France at Rome, asked the Pope why he was not satisfied with a general censure of some propositions of Quesnel without entering so far into particulars. "Ah! "M. Amelot, M. Amelot," answered the Pope, "what could "I do? Le Tellier had assured the King that there were in "the book more than a hundred censurable propositions, and "he did not choose to pass for a liar; they held the knife to "my throat to make me condemn more than a hundred."* Quesnel, the unfortunate author of this work, whom the Pope had said he wished to invite to reside near him, was obliged to fly from France into the Low Countries; but even there he was not safe. The Jesuits obtained an order from the King

The Bull Unigenitus.

* St. Simon, t. iv. p. 156.

of Spain to arrest him, and he was confined in the prison of Malines. By the assistance of a disciple, he afterwards escaped into Holland, and passed the remainder of his days at Amsterdam, in a zealous endeavour to establish Jansenist churches in that city.

The King had become, in the course of a long contest, very warm and eager on the side of the Jesuits. When James the Second meditated the appointment of Catholic bishops in England, Lewis wrote to him to take care not to appoint Jansenists, or he would admit a heresy as mischievous as that which he wished to supplant.* His theological zeal led him sometimes to a ridiculous excess. When the Duke of Orleans was about to take the command of the army in Spain, the King asked him, who he meant to take with him, and the Duke naming a person of the name of Fontpertuis, he objected that the mother of Fontpertuis was a Jansenist. "*Ma foi, Sire,*" answered the Duke of Orleans, "I do not know what the mother was, but "as for the son, so far from being a Jansenist, I do not think "he believes in God." "Indeed!" said the King, "are you "quite sure of that? In that case you may take him."†

The acceptation of the bull Unigenitus however, notwithstanding the King's blind zeal, met with great difficulties in France. Forty-eight bishops, who were at that time at Paris, assembled by order of the King; after debates which lasted for four entire months, forty of them agreed to accept the bull; eight, with Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, at their head, required explanations, and suspended their consent. In the

* Appendix to Fox's Hist. of James II.

† St. Simon, t. iv. p. 153. Mém. sur Louis XIV. Extraits de la Correspondance allemande de Madame Mère du Regent.

parliament, the bull met with still greater opposition. The ancient defenders of the liberties of the church of France could not easily consent to register a constitution of this kind as an act of supreme authority. The King, exhorted by his confessor to hold a bed of justice, attempted in lieu of it to accomplish his object, by sending for the chief persons of the judicial body. Of these, De Mesmes, the first president, was in favour of the Jesuits, but d'Aguesseau, the *procureur général*, who bore a high character for learning of all kinds, for piety, candour, and integrity, was known to be unfavourable to this increase of the power of the Pope and the Jesuits, at the expense of the King and the Gallican church. The chief, and most conspicuous fault of the character of d'Aguesseau, was a degree of timidity which often obscured and nearly extinguished the lustre of all his noble inclinations. His wife, of the family of Ormesson, knowing this defect, and wishing to deprive him of the favourite apology of feeble and interested characters, who always put forth a regard for their family, as an excuse for disgracing themselves, exclaimed to him, " Go; " in the presence of the King forget your wife and children; " lose every thing but honour."* The advice of this noble-minded woman for this time prevailed, and d'Aguesseau spoke to the King with the force which a good cause and an eloquent advocate command. Lewis, unaccustomed to find opposition to his will from his subjects, and more especially from his parliament, was greatly provoked at their reluctance, and meditated depriving d'Aguesseau and Joly de Fleury, who seconded him, of their offices. Seeing, however, that this step would not advance their purpose, the Jesuits be-

* Duclos, t. i.

thought themselves of other means of overcoming all opposition to the bull.

The Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, had long been a thorn in the side of those who wished to persecute without measure or mercy the unfortunate Jansenists. His nomination to the see of Paris, through the influence of Madame de Maintenon, had been one of the appointments most creditable to the monarch, and Lewis, conscious of his own merit, had said at the time, "If I had known any one "more worthy to fill the post than the bishop of Châlons, "I would not have appointed him." Kind and charitable in his disposition, magnificent in his hospitality, attentive to the duties of his see, Noailles had obtained in his diocese of Châlons the suffrages alike of the clergy, the nobility and the poor. In his more important station at Paris, he had continued the same course, and had thus regained for the church the respect of the people, which his predecessor, Harlai de Chauvalon, had much diminished by his known attachment to Madame de Lesdiguieres, and her notorious sale of benefices. So far was the Cardinal de Noailles from amassing treasure, that at his death only five hundred livres were found in his house above the sum necessary to pay his debts: the memory of his charity and kindness lived long in the hearts of the inhabitants of Paris. The Cardinal de Noailles.

Yet all these merits did not suffice, nor, even if they had been accompanied by the gifts of an apostle, would they have sufficed, to find pardon for the Cardinal in the eyes of the Jesuits. Even the bitterest of them, however, did not accuse him of partaking the opinions of the Jansenists.* All they

* See Mad. de Maintenon's letters to him on this subject. Lettres de Maintenon, t. ii.

could lay to his charge, was that he opposed them faintly; that he seemed to pity them; that he sometimes saved their victims; in short, he did not enter into the measures of persecution on which their vindictive hearts were bent. The approbation of the book of Quesnel, and his suspending in his see, the execution of the constitution *Unigenitus*, were the two chief facts upon which his enemies laid stress. In pursuit of his destruction, Le Tellier and his brethren omitted none of those arts and intrigues for which their order has been proverbial in every part of Europe. They excited the bishops in the provinces who belonged to their party, to issue charges in their dioceses against the Archbishop of Paris, which they stuck up on the walls of his palace, and when he attempted to retaliate, denounced him to the King as a persecutor of orthodox Catholics. On one occasion they had nearly been caught in their own net. The Abbé de Saron had been employed to write to his uncle the Bishop of Clermont, a man of eighty years old, transmitting a charge against Noailles, which he was desired to sign, and return to Père Le Tellier. The emissary employed, from scruples of conscience perhaps, perhaps from a hope of gain, carried the letters to the Cardinal, who had numerous copies taken of them, and sent them to the King and Madame de Maintenon. Le Tellier, however, made the Abbé de Saron take the whole blame upon himself, and deny the participation of the Jesuits; Lewis, grown old and inactive, was now in a state to believe any thing which he heard from his confessor, and, as too frequently happens, the storm fell not upon the guilty, but upon the discoverer of the crime. Noailles sunk into complete disgrace with the King, and was denied his presence. In this extremity,

Madame de Maintenon abandoned him; she had, indeed, frequently warned him of his danger, and told him that all the world complained of his lenity to the Jansenists; but when she saw him falling, she was much too prudent to risk her influence in order to save her friend. This the Cardinal was well aware of. In a letter to her, he says, "No misfortune shall alter my sentiments of veneration for him who "laid heavy his hand upon me, nor for her who might have "parried the blow."*

Insatiate in their vengeance, Le Tellier and his party now resolved to obtain from the King an order to seize the Cardinal, to carry him to Pierre Encise, and from there to Rome, where he was to be degraded in full consistory; to procure at the same time the suspension of D'Aguesseau, and give his office by commission to Chauvelin, a mere tool, who was ready to preside over a bed of justice, where the bull should be registered.

Stratagem of Madlle. de Chausseraye.

This bold scheme was defeated by the quickness and presence of mind of a woman of no rank or note. Mademoiselle de Chausseraye was the daughter of a gentleman of Poitou; having lost her parents, she had been recommended to Madame, and had been admitted into her household. The King, pleased with her manners and sincere devotion to his person, often gave her audiences alone. She made use of this advantage to prevent acts of harshness, and obtain favours for persons whom she thought deserving, even without any personal acquaintance with them. As an intimate friend of the Duchess of Ventadour, she was in the habit of hearing in her apartments the conversation of the Jesuit party, and being

* Letter to Madame de Maintenon. Mai, 1714.

thought a good natured harmless person, was allowed to know all their secret wishes and designs. By this means she became acquainted with the project of carrying off the Cardinal, which was to receive the final approbation of the King on the next day. Determined to lose no time, she directly sought and obtained a private audience of the King. "Sire," she said, "you do not look so well as you did yesterday; "you seem melancholy; I am afraid they vex you." "You "are right," answered the King, "there is something that "annoys me; they want me to take a step that is repugnant "to me, and it vexes me." "I respect your secrets, Sire, but "I will lay a wager it is for this bull, of which I do not under- "stand a word. For my part, I am a good christian, and do "not trouble myself with their disputes; but it is too good of "you to allow yourself to be harassed; let them arrange it as "they can; they think neither of your health nor your repose, "and that is what interests me, and the whole kingdom." "You do very right," said Lewis, "and I have a great mind "to do as you do." "Do then, Sire; leave all these priests "quarrels alone, regain your health, and all will be well."

The next day, at four in the morning, Mademoiselle de Chausseraye set out alone, had an interview with the Archbishop, advised him on no account to go out of Paris, and returned to Versailles without any one having been aware of her departure. When she saw her friends, she was rejoiced to find that their altered looks, and gloomy manner, attested the bad state of their affairs, and when she enquired if the Archbishop was to be arrested that day, they told her with every mark of consternation, that as soon as Le Tellier began to speak about it, the King cut him short, and told him to be

silent, with such evident displeasure, that they could not venture to return to the subject.*

It is impossible not to admire the dexterity with which Mademoiselle de Chausseraye conducted this affair, and above all, her thorough knowledge of the King. Had she pretended to interfere in the particular question; had she represented that the Cardinal de Noailles was a virtuous and dignified prelate, whom no one accused of more than a desire to protect the weaker party from the insatiate vengeance of their enemies; had she ventured to suggest that the Jansenists were among the most moral of all christians, that they paid obedience to the Pope, and differed only on one or two metaphysical questions, of no practical importance; had she hinted that persecution often propagates the opinion it is meant to suppress; on all or any of these topics, Lewis would never have listened to her. But when she spoke to him as one who thought only of his welfare, and expressed her fears that the violent and unjust act he was about to commit towards another, might have a bad effect upon his own health, she was heard, attended to, and successful.

There is one other reflection that arises upon this matter. Had Madame de Maintenon, with the powerful influence she possessed over the King, and such constant opportunities of using it, possessed half the charity, and half the courage of the obscure Mademoiselle de Chausseraye, how many persons she might have saved from destruction; how much might she have softened the last years of the administration of Lewis!

Certain it is, however, that Madame de Maintenon did not

* Duclos, t. i.

so exert her power, and her timidity cost dear to France. Although the Cardinal de Noailles escaped the punishment intended for him, the prisons were filled with persons suspected of the crime of Jansenism. When a division took place in the Sorbonne, those who voted against receiving the bull, were sent to prison; in every part of France priests, nuns, nobles, and often whole families, were confined in dungeons, and exposed to every kind of suffering with which confinement can be attended, because they would not allow that there were an hundred and one heretical propositions in the book of Quesnel. But in spite of these severities, the heretical opinions spread, and the virtues of the persons punished contributed to increase the odium, which every day more and more attached to the government of Lewis.

The foregoing details may seem to many, trifling and tiresome; but they are necessary, in order to understand, as well the feelings of the people towards Lewis at the close of his reign, as the subsequent history of France.

Will of Lewis XIV.

The other subject upon which the mind and conscience of the King were tormented by those around him, was the question of the Regency to be established by his will. In order to understand this subject, it is necessary to recur to some events which took place before the period we are now treating of. The Dauphin, the eldest son of Lewis the Fourteenth, died in 1711. His son, the Duke of Burgundy, who succeeded him, had borne the title of Dauphin only for a year, but long enough to obtain the affectionate attachment of France, when in the space of a single month, he, his wife, and his eldest son, were carried to a premature grave. The manner of their death was not singular: the Dauphiness was attacked

Death of the Dauphin and Dauphiness.

by a violent fever, which affected her head, and the Dauphin, after several nights attendance upon her, caught her complaint. But in those times, when men were still familiar with the crime of poisoning, and very imperfectly acquainted with the effects of disease upon the human frame, it was not to be expected that the sudden deaths of persons so eminent in rank should be attributed to natural causes. A consultation was held upon the bodies of the Dauphin and Dauphiness. Fagon, first physician to the King, a flatterer of Madame de Maintenon, and Boudin, physician to the Dauphiness, a vain and ignorant coxcomb, both maintained that the bodies bore marks of poison, and alleged as a proof of it, that the heart of the Dauphin was putrid, almost to dissolution. Maréchal, first surgeon to the King, on the other hand, though alone, and secretly not quite confident in his opinion, positively maintained that the bodies bore no marks of poison, and that he had several times seen the same effects produced by putrid fevers of great malignity. The suspicion of poison was rendered still more dreadful by the family relation which subsisted between the King and the person suspected of the crime. Madame de Maintenon, in the presence of Maréchal and the physicians, went so far as to say, that it was well known where the blow came from, and immediately named the Duke of Orleans, the nephew of the King. The King assented, and seemed to have no doubt of the truth of what she said. Fagon confirmed their opinions by nods of the head, and Boudin added that he had no doubt of the prince's guilt.* Let us pause for a moment to remark on the life and manners of him who was thus boldly

The Duke of Orleans accused of poisoning them.

* St. Simon, vol. vi. p. 94. St. Simon heard all this from Maréchal.

accused of one of the most atrocious crimes it is possible for man to commit.

Previous life of the Duke of Orleans.

Philip, Duke of Orleans, the son of Monsieur, the King's brother, and a German princess, had been married when young to one of the natural daughters of the King by Madame de Montespan. At once ashamed of his marriage, and indignant at the means which had been employed to procure his consent, he fell into a course of licentious conduct, and passed his time with the most abandoned women, and the most profligate men of the age. This behaviour, at any time reprehensible, was more peculiarly remarked at a period when the Court laid so great a stress upon strictness of morals, and punctuality of devotion; yet, singular to say, the Duke of Orleans, by the good qualities of his heart, the frankness of his manners, and the benevolence of his nature, preserved the affections of many men of the best and most estimable character. Among them, the celebrated Fenelon and the Duke of St. Simon were conspicuous; but, above all, it was remarkable that no one had shewn more friendly anxiety for his welfare, than the late Duke of Burgundy. When serving in Spain, the Duke of Orleans had imprudently entered into an intrigue for placing the Spanish crown upon his own head, in case Philip the Fifth should renounce it. The plot was discovered, and the Dauphin proposed in the council of state that he should be tried for high treason. At this time the Duke of Burgundy interposed, spoke with warmth in favour of his cousin, and saved him from disgrace, if not from death. What probability was there that he should now have turned against his benefactor, and, with singular infatuation, have murdered his friends, while he left his

bitter enemies in the full possession of life and power? But even admitting him to be capable of such wickedness, how unlikely that he should be able to poison three persons at the same time without detection; and that he should succeed in giving to two of them the appearance of a natural fever! But the story is too full of absurdity to merit refutation. The people, however, quick in their suspicions, and hasty, though generous in their sentiments, were easily induced to look upon the Duke of Orleans as the poisoner of their beloved Dauphin. For, strange as it may appear, mankind have a natural tendency to believe any thing that is incredible; and many persons of moderate capacity form their opinion against an accused person, not from the strength of the evidence, but from the atrocity of the crime imputed to him; laying a stress not on the weight of the proof, but on the gravity of the charge. Some unfortunate circumstances contributed to favour the credulity of the vulgar. Fond of literature and of science, the Duke of Orleans had constructed a laboratory in his palace, and employed a chemist of celebrity, of the name of Homberg, to assist him in performing experiments. This well known fact, together with a foolish avowal that he had attempted to see the devil, and some nonsensical endeavours to guess at futurity, by means of glasses of water, led the ignorant of all classes to a full persuasion of his guilt. The feelings of the multitude were speedily shewn in a manner not to be mistaken. When the Duke of Orleans went to throw holy water, upon two separate occasions, on the remains of the late Dauphin and Dauphiness, according to the forms of the Court, persons in the streets pointed at him with

their fingers, and loaded him with the most revolting and injurious epithets. The day of the funeral was attended with still more insult; and when the procession passed the Palais Royal, the tumult was so violent, that for some minutes it seemed likely to end in an attack on the life of the prince.

His conduct.

In this painful situation, the Duke of Orleans, by the advice of the Marquis d'Effiat, went to the King, and asked permission to give himself up as a prisoner at the Bastile, praying at the same time that his Majesty would be pleased to give orders that Homberg, and such other persons of his household as the King might think proper, should be arrested. Lewis received him with an air of cold disdain, and immediately refused his request. Upon the pressing instances of the prince, however, he agreed that Homberg should be received at the Bastile, if he chose to go there; but this consent was soon afterwards retracted: Homberg, upon presenting himself at the Bastile, was refused admittance; and when the Duke of Orleans again insisted, the King turned his back upon him, and refused to answer.* It is said, that the refusal of the King was owing to the advice of Maréchal, who represented that the justification of the Duke of Orleans would still leave a stain upon his character in the eyes of the world, always credulous of accusation, and sceptical of innocence. Besides, in his cooler moments, Lewis himself probably did not believe in the guilt of his nephew. Maréchal having once said to him, that if the Duke of Orleans were a private person, he would have ten ways of gaining an honest livelihood,

* St. Simon, Duclos, Voltaire.

and that he was besides, the best natured man in the world, Lewis replied, "*Savez vous ce que c'est que mon neveu? "C'est un fanfaron de crimes.*"*

The conduct of the Duke of Orleans upon this occasion, has been very generally blamed, both by his friend, the Duke of St. Simon, by Voltaire, and by subsequent historians. Yet, what is more natural, or more honourable, than for a man unjustly aspersed, and loaded with the most cruel calumnies, to seek for a fair and open hearing, where he may meet his accusers and dispel the accusation? It has been said, that it was beneath the dignity of a son of France to put himself in the place of a prisoner for trial; but surely it is not beneath the dignity of any man, who feels himself innocent, to endeavour, by the most undeniable evidence, and in the most public manner, to shake off the imputation of guilt. It has been said likewise by St. Simon, and those who blame the Duke of Orleans, that he might have confounded his enemies, by throwing the charge of poison either on the heads of the Duke of Maine, or of the Court of Austria. But, in all probability, the Duke of Orleans did not believe the fact that the late Dauphin had been poisoned, and, in that case, such a defence would have made him guilty of the same crime towards others, which the bitterest and least scrupulous of his enemies had committed against him.

A fair trial being refused, however, by the King, the reports of this horrible deed, incapable of being met and refuted, made their way from Paris to the provinces, and over the whole of Europe. In the palace of Lewis, the base train

* "Do you know what my nephew is? A braggart of crimes he does not commit." Duclos. t. i. St. Simon.

of the Court, gave a singular testimony of their belief in these dreadful rumours. The King, bound by etiquette, more sacred in palaces than feeling, continued to ask the Duke of Orleans to Marly, and on all his other excursions; but wherever he appeared, and which ever way he moved, the courtiers hastily turned from him, and left him standing in an empty circle. Even the Duchess of Orleans, his wife, was abandoned by all the ladies of the Court.*

Project of Madame de Maintenon.

In this singular and sudden reverse of the fortunes of the House of Orleans, Madame de Maintenon saw a propitious opening for the advancement of a person to whom she was tenderly attached, and for the maintenance of her own greatness. It was evident, that if she allowed the Duke of Orleans to succeed quietly to the Regency, her own power and credit were for ever at an end. She could never hope to have any influence during the supremacy of a prince who had become her personal enemy, and to whose mother she was an object of undisguised detestation. It has been said, that in order to avoid this evil, the Jesuit, Le Tellier, had once a project of declaring the marriage of Madame de Maintenon, and investing her with the Regency, but I am not inclined to believe even in the proposal of a scheme so evidently impracticable. There was another method of excluding the Duke of Orleans, at once more agreeable to the wishes of the favourite, and more easy of execution.

The Duke of Maine.

The Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse were the sons of Lewis and Madame de Montespan. In order to please the King, Harlay, President of the Parliament, discovered a method of conferring the rights of legitimacy upon

* St. Simon, t. vi.

children, without mentioning the mother. This process, which was first tried in the case of the Chevalier de Longueville, the son of the Duke of Longueville, who was killed at the passage of the Rhine, and of the Maréchale de la Ferté, was employed in favour of the Duke of Maine in 1673, and of the other children of Madame de Montespan in the following year. In 1694, the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse had an intermediate rank given to them between the princes of the blood and the *Ducs et Pairs;* they were not to have the privilege of walking across the floor of the Parliament, like princes of the blood, and were to be addressed by the president by the names of their peerage, which princes of the blood were not, but the president was to take off his cap to them, which he did not do to the peers.* In 1710 the same privilege was extended to their children, and St. Simon has carefully recorded, with many additional details, that it was on a Saturday, the 15th of March, that this dreadful innovation was announced. In fact, the distinctions granted to the illegitimate sons excited in the breasts of the princes of the blood, and still more in those of the *Ducs et Pairs,* feelings of the deepest and most lasting indignation. Valincourt, a member of the Academy, perceiving the murmur

* The privilege of walking across the floor, or parquet of the Parliament, took its rise in a trifling circumstance. The parquet was a small square enclosed before the president, where no one ever put his foot. An old prince of Condé having an attack of the gout, one day walked across it to his seat to save himself trouble. Some time after the Duke of Enghien, known as the great Condé, followed his father, who advised him to desist. "Let me see who will dare to stop me," said the Duke of Enghien. From this time the right of walking across the parquet was a privilege of the princes of the blood. Such are the objects for which men contend!

occasioned by these edicts, said to the Count of Toulouse, "Monseigneur, you have got a crown of roses, which when "the flowers fall off, I fear will become a crown of thorns."*

The Duke of Maine, for whom these things were done, and still further extraordinary favours projected, seems to have been exactly of such a character as we should expect to find in a son of Madame de Montespan, educated by Madame de Maintenon. He was remarkable for the talent of conversation, excelled in relating anecdote, abounded in witty and refined observation, and was, when he chose it, an excellent mimic. With these powers, his society was extremely pleasing to the King, who saw in him a person unbiassed by the intrigues of party, and equally removed from those scandalous excesses which, in the Duke of Orleans, excited his displeasure, and from that inclination for business, which in the Duke of Burgundy had sometimes roused his jealousy Thus trusted, and admitted more than any one, except Madame de Maintenon, into the interior, he was able to give advice in the shape of flattery; to insinuate his own opinions, while he appeared to be applauding those of the King; and to strike deadly blows at his enemies, when he seemed to be merely drawing ludicrous pictures for the amusement of his sovereign and parent. He was, at the same time, a profound and perpetual hypocrite, apparently absorbed by his devotions and his domestic duties, and devoid of ambition, envy, or hatred. Yet, with so much ability and so much cunning, the Duke of Maine seems to have been destitute, both in the cabinet and in the field, of the power of persevering exertion, and of that quality which

* Duclos, t. i.

is so appropriately termed presence of mind. When he should have been employed in suiting his means to the great end at which he aimed he was busy in translating into French verse the Anti-Lucretius of the Abbé de Polignac. When entrusted by his father with the command in Flanders, his conduct made him a subject of mortification to his own army, and a laughing-stock to the enemy. Upon his return, a person of the court gave him a reproof, which at once shows how notorious his misbehaviour had become, and how great was the liberty of speech used at the court of Lewis. The Duke d'Elbœuf begged that he might always accompany the Duke of Maine in his campaigns: "why so?" asked the Duke; "because," replied the other, "I am sure that where your royal "highness goes, there will be no danger of losing one's life."

The Duchess of Maine.

The Duchess of Maine was a person of a different stamp. A grandaughter of the great Condé, she had all the aspiring ambition and restless spirit of intrigue, which distinguished that remarkable man. She felt with the innate pride of family, the mortification of being married to an illegitimate son, and on expressing her thanks to Madame de Maintenon for the honours conferred on her husband, the terms she used were, "I can now shew my children without shame." With these passions, and great quickness of understanding, it is no wonder if the Duchess of Maine felt warmly, when fortune seemed to open to her a prospect of boundless extent. Her dressing room became a cabinet council; her ladies of the bed chamber negociators and politicians.

Such were the persons whom Madame de Maintenon endeavoured to place at the head of the government to be formed after the demise and by the will of Lewis. Some cir-

cumstances contributed to aid her project. In May, 1714, the Duke of Berri, the only grandson of Lewis remaining in France, died after a short illness. It is said, that when the body was opened, his stomach was found to be ulcerated, and suspicions of poison immediately fell upon his wife, a daughter of the Duke of Orleans, whose conduct had been so licentious and abandoned, that her husband at the very time of his death, was about to request for an order her confinement in the Bastile, from the King. This event awakened in all their former violence, the reports which had prevailed two years before respecting the Duke of Orleans. Another circumstance which emboldened the friends of the Duke of Maine, was the publication of a history of France, by Father Daniel, a Jesuit, in which great pains were taken to shew that the kings of the first and second race had often called their illegitimate sons to the succession of the throne. The ladies of the court, with ridiculous learning, said: "Clovis was not so great a man as Lewis the Fourteenth, and "yet in a similar case he did more."*

It must be confessed that Lewis was in a painful and embarrassing situation. On the one side, he saw the woman whom he most loved, and a son for whom he had a tender affection, entreating him, as it were, not to confide the person of his infant heir, and the government of his people, to a prince personally offensive to him by the laxity of his morals, and regarded by the whole of his court, as one whom no scruples, even at the most horrible crimes, could stop in his way to power. On the other side, the long practice of the monarchy, and the experience of his own and his father's

* The Princess d'Harcourt to Madame de Maintenon.

minority, taught him how little the will of a king could prevail over proximity of blood, and the inclinations of the parliament. His religious strictness likewise, must have been somewhat shocked at preferring the fruit of an adulterous amour, to a prince of the blood, and his high notions of the privileges belonging to the legitimate branch of the royal family, must have been startled at the contemplation of a project, which disturbed the regularity of succession, and excluded from power the nearest relation to the throne.

With his mind full of these and other difficulties, Lewis long hesitated. At length in 1714, he signed an edict, granting to the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse, the power of succeeding to the crown after the princes of the blood. In the following year he made them rank in all respects as princes of the blood. But the King was himself aware that this stretch of royal power, while it opened to his favourite son more extensive prospects, likewise exposed him to greater dangers. "You have chosen it," he said to him one day, "I have done for you what I could; it is for you to confirm "it by your merit."* The edict was registered by the parliament without opposition; but when the King endeavoured to explain his reasons for what he had done to a deputation, to whom he delivered the edict, the first president answered him: "Sire, a disposition of this nature touches a matter so "high, and is of so great consequence, that we cannot doubt "that your majesty has made all the reflections upon it, that "your profound wisdom can inspire." Lewis was obliged to conceal the displeasure which this equivocal compliment gave him.†

Edict of 1714.

* Duclos, t. i. † St. Simon.

The Will.

All was not yet accomplished: the last scene of this curious drama was the signature and delivery of the King's will. Madame de Maintenon appears to have prompted, and Voisin, her creature, Chancellor of the kingdom, to have drawn up this important document. By this instrument, a council of regency was named, of which the Duke of Orleans was to be president, but where every thing was to be decided by a plurality of voices. The council was to be composed of the Duke of Bourbon, when he should have attained the age of twenty-four, of the Duke of Maine, of the Count of Toulouse, of the Chancellor, the chief of the royal council, the Marshals Villeroy, Villars, Tallard, and Harcourt, the four secretaries of state, and the Comptroller General. All resolutions appertaining to the royal functions were to be taken; all appointments whatever to be made by this council. The president was only to have a casting voice in the case of the number of suffrages being equal. The Duke of Maine was entrusted with the care of the education, personal safety, and preservation of the young king, with the full command of the household, both civil and military. In case of death, he was to be succeeded by the Count of Toulouse. Marshal Villeroy was named governor of the young king, under the Duke of Maine.*

These unwise and futile provisions perfectly reflect the embarrassed and wavering mind of the King. Unable to convince himself the Duke of Orleans had been actually guilty of the crimes imputed to him, he could not resolve to remove him altogether from the place to which he was entitled, and vainly imagined that by placing him at the head of

* See a copy of the will. Œuvres de Louis XIV. t. ii.

the council of regency, he preserved to him the rank due to his royal birth. On the other hand, unable to clear entirely from his thoughts the suspicions which those about him, were continually pouring into his ear, he attempted to deprive his nephew of all power, and to surround him with such a number of his most favourite servants as might be more than sufficient to neutralize his influence in the council. But this was one of those occasions in which a half measure was peculiarly inexpedient. The Duke of Orleans could be deprived of the regency by no other way than the most determined and unscrupulous hostility; by giving currency and confirmation to the suspicions of his opponents: by excluding him from all participation in the government, as a man who could not be trusted without hazard, and by arming his adversaries with strength and means sufficient to carry that exclusion into effect. To leave him with any part of the regency, was to open his way to the whole, but with this additional inconvenience, that the kingdom was exposed to the risk of civil war, during the contention of two balanced and exasperated competitors for power. With the Duke of Orleans, as with a wild beast, there were only two courses to pursue; to leave him alone, or to destroy him; to wound him and then let him loose, was to incur needless peril, and make choice of an unbalanced evil.

Language of Lewis.

Lewis himself seems to have had little expectation, and perhaps little wish that his will should be executed. In delivering the sealed packet to the first president and attorney general of the parliament, he said to them; "Gentlemen, "this is my will; there is no one but myself who knows "what it contains; the examples of the kings, my predeces-

" sors, and that of the will of the king, my father, do not " allow me to be ignorant of what may be the fate of this; " but others have chosen it. Happen what may, at least, I " shall hear no more about it." At these last words, he shook his head, and went into another room. The next day, seeing the Queen of England, he repeated nearly the same words to her, adding, " I know the uselessness of what I have done; " we can do all that we choose during our life time, after- " wards, less than private persons."* By these expressions, Lewis seemed clearly to foresee that his will would be set aside, and it must be added, that by these public declarations of his opinion, he contributed to the event which he prophesied. Perhaps he was not in his heart unwilling that the legitimate rights of birth should prevail even over his own express command and disposition.

Codicils of the Will.

Two codicils were added to the will. By one of these, the King ordered Marshal Villeroy to take the command of the troops, and the charge of the King's person, till his will should be opened; by a second, he appointed Fleury, bishop of Frejus, preceptor to the young king. Fleury had made himself agreeable to the ladies of the court, and was recommended to Madame de Maintenon by two of her friends. In her eyes, and in those of the greater part of the court, it

* St. Simon, t. 6. pp. 149, 150. The editor of the works of Lewis the XIV. doubts the fact of the King having spoken these words; but the authority of St. Simon is supported by those of Madame, and the Duke of Berwick. This last was told by the Queen of England, that Lewis said, " They insisted abso- " lutely I should do it, but when I am dead, it will be neither more nor less than " if I had not done it." Mem. de Berwick, t. ii. Neither is the story improbable in itself.

was his strongest recommendation, that he was not devoted to the Jesuits. At the same time, in order to disarm the opposition of this powerful body, he had issued a charge condemning the doctrine of the Jansenists in the strongest terms, which was answered with much sharpness, and some ridicule by Quesnel himself. It has been conjectured with great plausibility, that this answer converted a pretended foe into a real one, and that the animosity with which the Cardinal Fleury afterwards pursued the Jansenist party, is greatly to be attributed to the wounded vanity of the bishop of Frejus.*

Decline of Lewis.

The health of the King was now evidently breaking. The rapidity of his decline has been attributed to the violence of the remedies which were employed by his physicians: his remaining strength, instead of being supported by gentle cordials, was exhausted by the frequent and copious use of purgatives and sudorifics. Some have gone so far as to ascribe this treatment to the treachery of Fagon, his physician; but the supposition is absurd, and the low state of medicine, which at this time, probably, killed as many as it cured, is sufficient to account for the fact.

His Death

When in nearly the last stage of weakness, however, Lewis was able to receive an ambassador of Persia, with his usual pomp and magnificence; but it has been conjectured that the importance both of the envoy and of the mission was greatly exaggerated by the courtiers, in order to revive those feelings of pride and ambition in which this ostentatious prince had so long found his chief delight. This was in August 1715. In the same month, after his return from Marly, it was discovered

* St. Simon, t. vi. p. 210.

that he had a mortification in his leg, which left him not long to live. When informed that his disease was without a remedy, he shewed not the smallest uneasiness, and calmly said, that in that case he had better be left to die in peace. He asked Maréchal, his surgeon, upon whose sincerity he relied, how long he thought he might live: Maréchal replied, "till Wednes- "day:" "My sentence then is for Wednesday," said the King, without the least mark of trouble, disappointment, or alarm. From this time, and indeed, in the whole course of his last illness, he displayed a patience, courage, and tranquillity, to which, even those the least inclined to praise him, have borne testimony in terms of the warmest admiration. When the members of his family collected around him were melted into tears at the sight of the painful sufferings he endured, he said to them, "This is too affecting; let us separate." To Madame de Maintenon he calmly observed, "I thought it was "more difficult to die:" and seeing in the looking glass that his attendants were crying, he said to them, "Why do you "weep? did you believe me immortal?" Addressing himself to the Cardinals Rohan and Bissy, in a solemn voice he declared, "I die in the faith, and in submission to the "church; I have little knowledge of the subjects which dis- "turb it; I have done entirely what you wished; if I have "done wrong, you will answer for it before God, whom I here "call to witness." Some of the medical attendants asking one another if he might not see the Cardinal de Noailles, he expressed a desire to that effect; but Le Tellier had sufficient art to insert conditions with which Noailles could not comply. The King then sent for the Dauphin, and holding him in his arms, addressed to him the following words: "You are going

" soon to be king of a great kingdom; what I recommend to " you most strongly is, never to forget your obligations " to God; recollect that you owe to him all that you are. " Endeavour to preserve peace with your neighbours. I " have been too fond of war; do not imitate me in that, any " more than the excessive expenses I have gone into. Take " counsel in every thing, and endeavour to know what is best, " that you may always follow it. Relieve your people as " soon as possible, and do what I have had the misfortune " not to be able to do myself." These words were afterwards, by command of Marshal Villeroy, written at the foot of the bed of Lewis the Fifteenth, and remained there during his life. He likewise addressed some words to his officers of state, and those of the nobility who attended his bedside; he told them he was sorry not to have rewarded them better than he had done, but that the adversity of his latter years, had not permitted it. " Serve the Dauphin," he continued, " with the same affection you have had for me, he is a child " of five years old, who may meet with many crosses, as I " remember to have done, when I was young. Be all united, " for union is the force of a state. Follow the orders, that " my nephew, the Duke of Orleans, will give you; he is going " to govern the kingdom; I believe that he will do it well. " I hope also that you will all do your duty, and that you " will sometimes remember me." To the Duke of Orleans, he is reported to have said; " You will see by my last dispo- " sitions, the entire confidence that I have in you; you are " Regent of the Kingdom; your birth gives you this right, " and my inclination is in concert with the justice that is due

" to you. Govern the state well during the minority of this " prince; if he dies, you are the sovereign; if he lives, try " above all to make him a Christian King; let him love his " people, and make himself beloved by them." What is still more remarkable, he said to him, speaking of the Dauphin, " I recommend him to you, and die in tranquillity, leaving " him in your hands." These expressions of the dying King, seem to prove almost to demonstration, that he did not then in the bottom of his heart, believe the horrible accusations that had been made against his nephew. He added some words at the desire of Madame de Maintenon, to recommend her to the protection of the Duke of Orleans. " She has " never given me any but good counsels;" he said, " I should " have done well to have followed them. She has been useful " to me in every thing, but above all, for my salvation. Do " every thing that she asks of you for herself, for her relations, " her friends, and connexions; she will not abuse this power. " Let her address herself directly to you for all she wants."* In the same spirit of tranquillity which he shewed throughout, Lewis gave directions that his heart should be placed in the church of the Jesuits, opposite to that of his father, and that Vincennes should be got ready for the reception of the Dauphin, whom he called the young king. Once or twice, speaking of himself, he said, " when I was king."

The last days of Lewis were, undoubtedly, passed in a manner to do him honour, but the persons around him, not having the same immediate fear of death before their eyes,

* These speeches of Lewis the XIV. are taken from the Œuvres de Louis XIV. Edition of 1806. t. ii. p. 491.

continued to display the appropriate vices of their nature. The Jesuits were bitter and persecuting; the courtiers base and interested; Madame de Maintenon timid and selfish as usual. The confessor, Le Tellier, nearly to the last continued to vex the King with perpetual solicitations concerning the registration of the bull: the attendants twice refused him admittance into the bed-chamber of the monarch.* The levee of the Duke of Orleans, who had been avoided and insulted at Marly, began to be crowded with courtiers, vying with each other to boast their early defection from their dying master. A quack appeared at Versailles with an elixir, with which he promised to cure the King, and Lewis at the request of his nephew, was induced to take it. He seemed a little revived, and was able to eat: the courtiers immediately flew back to pay their homage. "If the King eats a second time," said the Duke of Orleans, "we shall have nobody." Madame de Maintenon herself, alarmed perhaps at the danger of popular tumults, retired to St. Cyr, on the Wednesday that Maréchal had fixed for the King's death, leaving him in a kind of stupor. When he awoke, he found that she was gone, and was obliged to send for her back. This was the last mortification which Lewis had to experience; he died on the 1st of September, 1715.

Joy of the People.

The news of the demise of the sovereign was received with universal joy by the people. On the day of his funeral, tents were set up on the roads to St. Denis, and crowds passed the day, in shouting whenever the procession appeared, and in drinking, laughing, and singing, on the happy occasion

* Voltaire. Siècle de L. XIV.

of the death of their sovereign.* Yet they were the same people, who, in 1686, had shed tears of alarm and anxiety during the king's illness, and who, in 1699, had burst forth in tumultuous joy at a report of the death of William the Third. The misfortunes of the war, the misery of the people, and the gloomy tyranny, which the Jesuits had exercised during the last years of Lewis, were the chief causes of this revolution of popular feeling. It is reported, that when he was very young, his mother had said to him, " My son, resemble your grand-" father, and not your father;" and the King asking the reason, " because," she answered, " the people cried at the death " of Henry the Fourth, and laughed at that of Lewis the " Thirteenth."

Character of Lewis.

There is no man of whom more has been told and written, than Lewis the Fourteenth. Every part of his life has been described and related by persons who had excellent opportunities of knowing the truth. Madame de Motteville, a lady attached to the service of his mother, and La Porte, his first *valet de chambre*, have left memoirs relating to his infancy and youth. The history of his reign, which he entrusted to the courtly pens of his pensioned men of letters, has been given with more exactness, by admirers who had nothing to gain by his favour, and censurers who had nothing to fear from his displeasure. The minutiæ of his daily life have been recorded in the servile journal of Dangeau, and the faults of his character strongly painted by the powerful satire of St. Simon. The exterior of his court, has been admirably sketched by the delicate pen of Madame de Sévigné, and the secrets of the interior have been partly revealed to us by the

* Siècle de Louis XIV., Duclos. Vie de Phil. d'Orleans.

familiar and private communications of Madame de Maintenon. Let us add to all this, the innumerable memoirs written by persons anxious to hand down the current gossip of the court, in a nation where every thing becomes in a short time the common topic of the town; where the secrets of the state are carried in a few days by the minister to his mistress; by the mistress to her favoured lover; and by the lover to his friends, who are perhaps the bitter enemies of the minister. On such a theatre, Lewis was a perpetual actor; always in public; always watched; the object of a thousand curious eyes, and the subject of a thousand malicious tongues. A word scarcely passed from his lips, before it was whispered in every circle of the court, and few hours elapsed before it was recorded in twenty manuscript books, with the comment of the writer, for the instruction of the latest posterity.

With such materials in our hands, what has been the fate of the memory of this famous monarch? It may perhaps be illustrated by a circumstance mentioned by Chardin, in his amusing travels in the east. A tomb near a city was said to contain the body of a celebrated saint: a mausoleum was built to his honour, and the people resorted to it with veneration. Suddenly a report was spread that the body found there, was that of a well-known heretic; the mausoleum was destroyed and ashes spread upon the spot. At length it was discovered that the tomb was neither that of the saint or of the heretic, but of some indifferent person. The place was then neglected, and men ceased either to crowd to it with reverence, or to pass it by with malediction.

Such is, in some respects, the fate of the character of Lewis the Fourteenth. Admired at first by his country; the

favourite theme of the greatest wits of his age; and, what is still more wonderful, of the greatest writer of his nation during the succeeding century: he was long considered in France as a model of a great king; and if not endowed with extraordinary genius, or blessed with uniform success, yet, as having acquired altogether as much of military and civil glory, as any sovereign who had ever been the hereditary possessor of a throne. But when, in the days of philosophy, men began to discover that the benefits of his government were illusory, the conquests of his arms pernicious, and the praises of his academicians blind or venal, they turned upon Lewis himself the whole torrent of public opinion, and exposed him to the scorn of the world, as an unfeeling and selfish tyrant. Neither of these opinions deserves the stamp of history. Lewis had not, in his nature, any very odious qualities; his faults were rather the effect of his station, than of his original character. He was generous, munificent, fond of letters, and of arts; a good son, an indulgent master, happy in his temper, anxious to do justice in his decisions. Impressed from his youth upwards with a sincere piety, it was his earnest wish to gain the approbation both of God and man; and if, in his blind zeal, he thought the favour of the Deity was to be acquired by persecution, and the glory of a great name to be gained by laying waste the territory of his neighbours, we must not blame the error of an ordinary mind, so much as the perversion of public opinon, which called bigotry religion, and made unjust conquest the basis of reputation.

Yet, when these abatements are made on the one side, we shall find that it is impossible either greatly to admire, or greatly to love, the character of Lewis. If we look to his under-

standing, we shall see that he was remarkable chiefly for his great attention to business, and his love of affixing his own name to the designs of others. His capacity was by no means extraordinary. He had the mischievous passion of a conqueror, without any of the heroism which excites our sympathy, or the military genius that subdues our reason, in favour of the destroyers of mankind. He sent forth his thousands to perish on the Rhine. or the Danube, that he might rest his head at Versailles upon the soft cushion of vanity, and receive the extravagant compliments of his servile subjects. From a habit of self-indulgence, and a ready belief in flattery, he came to direct all his passions to one object, and that object the gratification and aggrandizement of himself. If he had mistresses whom he seemed to love, he behaved to them in a manner which shewed that he considered their happiness, and even their lives, as of little value, in comparison with the indulgence of his comfort or caprice. If he had friends, whom he appeared to esteem, he left their services for years unrewarded, that he might enjoy their dependence; and punished their faults without mercy on a calculation of political advantages. As for his country, he considered it as centered in his own person; and, with a character the very opposite of that of Henry the Fourth, mistook the magnificence of his own court for the happiness of his people.

His ruling ambition.

One who played so great a part in the world, however, deserves to be examined more in detail. The great and leading ambition of Lewis, was to govern by himself. Nothing was so much the object of his alarm, as the notion of the influence of a prime minister, who should deprive him at once of power and glory. He was moved to this fear more especially by the

example of his father, and by that of his mother during the regency. Lewis the Thirteenth had been thoroughly subdued by Richelieu; and Anne of Austria, in like manner, was so entirely subjugated by Mazarin, that she could not obtain from him the smallest office for any of her friends.* The son spared no precaution to escape falling under the same yoke. As the ministers of Lewis the Thirteenth, and Anne, had been Cardinals, he made a rule to admit no Cardinal into his council. He took care to avoid the common rock of princes, the habit of reposing upon others the burthen of affairs, and in this conduct, he seems to have been guided by the dying advice of Mazarin. With these and other precautions, he thought himself to the last so independent of any governing minister, that he wrote in 1704, to M. de Chateauneuf, "Explain to her (the Queen of Spain) that I decide every thing myself, and that no one would dare to impose upon me, statements contrary to the truth."†

But for a King to govern by himself, something more is requisite than an attention to business, and a determination not to confer the title of prime minister. He who really governs a great nation, must have a large capacity, or a quick invention; he must have, in short, some power of originating measures, fitted to the emergency on which he is called to decide. Had Lewis this talent? It is quite clear that he had not. His early measures of finance, were evidently the measures of Colbert: his subsequent wars, were planned and conducted by

* Mem. de Motteville, t. v.

† "Expliquez lui que je décide de toutes choses par moi même, et que personne n'oecroit me supposer des faits contraires à la vérité." Œuvres de Louis, XIV. t. vi. p. 156.

Louvois; the succession war, and the negociations of his latter years, were the work of Torcy. No one can hesitate in attributing these measures to their right authors.

Choice of Ministers.

It remains then to be seen, how he proceeded in the choice of his ministers; a part of his government of which he was even more proud than of the rest. With respect to the ministers appointed by Lewis at the beginning of his reign, we have authentic information of the grounds upon which they were selected. Tellier, Lionne, and Colbert, were the creatures of Cardinal Mazarin; had been brought forward by him out of obscurity, placed in ostensible situations, and recommended with his dying breath to the preference of his sovereign.* Mazarin himself had been a creature of Richelieu, who was first employed in political affairs by Queen Mary of Medicis. Lewis maintained in their offices two of the ministers I have mentioned as long as they lived, and afterwards gave the reversion of the places to their relations; Louvois, the son, and Barbesieux, the grandson of Tellier: Seignelai, and Torcy, the son and nephew of Colbert. In making these promotions, he seems to have exercised little judgment, for the dissipated and profligate Barbesieux, was admitted to the post of Secretary of State in his administration, as well as the skilful and industrious Torcy. Thus Lewis may be said to have owed the greater part of his ministers to the judgments of Mazarin and Richelieu, or, in other words, to the discrimination of his grandmother. When, after the death of Barbesieux, it became necessary to appoint a new minister of war, the King fixed upon Chamillard, who had been brought forward, and made intendant at

* Mem. de Motteville.

St. Cyr, by Madame de Maintenon. After a short time, it became evident that Chamillard was totally unfit for his office, and he was at length driven from his post by the incessant raillery of the court.*

The person fixed upon to supply his place was Voisin, who had become known to the King in the following manner. He was intendant at a small town on the frontier, at which Madame de Maintenon resided during the siege of Lisle. Madame Voisin spared no pains to please her powerful guest, and was fortunate enough to make her a present of a warm *robe-de-chambre*, at the approach of the cold weather, which happened unusually early that year, and found Madame de Maintenon unprepared to meet it. From this time, the fortune of the intendant was secured. He rose to be minister of war, and before the death of Lewis, was chancellor of the kingdom, having from first to last had nothing to recommend him but his time-serving temper. Such were the selections of Lewis. The only peculiarity that distinguishes them is, that, fearful of the eclipse of his reputation, he never appointed a minister of transcendent abilities. Of Colbert, who has the greatest celebrity of all the ministers of this reign, I shall speak hereafter. Torcy, who shewed considerable talents towards the end of the reign, excited such jealousy in the king, that it is said, he would not have maintained him in office much longer.† Indeed, Lewis scarcely

* Especially of the Maréchal de Boufflers, who, when Madame de Maintenon asked him who was fit for the post, said, "Fagon." Fagon was the king's physician, as before mentioned; Boufflers shewed by a severe satirical comparison, that he would make a much better minister of war than Chamillard. See St. Simon.

† Massillon. Minorité de Louis XV.

disguises in his memoirs, his wish to keep away from his councils, any man whose capacity might dim the lustre of his own. Such conduct resembles more the policy of the acting manager of a provincial theatre, than the magnanimity of a great monarch; and yet he is not ashamed to say, when speaking of Kings, " Exercising here below a function alto-" gether divine, we ought to appear incapable of the agita-" tions which might degrade it."*

Much has been said by the historians of these times, of the great men who surrounded the throne of Lewis; but the more we examine the subject, the less we shall be disposed to attribute the appearance of those ornaments of his reign, to the personal protection of the King. The greater part of them had already discovered their talents before Lewis took the reigns of government. Their appearance is with much more reason attributed by Montesquieu, to the agitations of the minority, and the troubled times which preceded it.

Of the personal talents of Lewis for government, it is impossible to speak highly. Even the quality upon which he most prided himself, the power of attending to the details of business, being unattended by great general views, was more specious than solid. At first, indeed, his determination to see every dispatch, and examine every article of expenditure, may have been politic, as a means of correcting abuses, and quickening the zeal of subordinate agents; but when this object was effected, a minute attention to every little account of cloathing for a troop of horse, shewed rather the pedant than the statesman; and his perseverance in writing his own dispatches to his generals, during the last twenty

* Œuvres de Louis XIV. vol. ii. p. 34.

years of his life, is a proof rather of a puerile vanity, than of a comprehensive mind. In fact, it was by this very fondness for details, that his ministers were enabled to occupy him in minutiæ, and to assume the direction of great affairs.

Personal character.

In his private character, if private character he can be said to have had, Lewis was often generous and kind; often cold and unfeeling; he had much of the selfishness, but little of the impatience and caprice that unrestrained power is apt to engender. His behaviour to the persons immediately about him, is the best part of his conduct; and if he can be at all considered a hero, it is with respect to his *valet-de-chambre*, that that character must be allowed him. When one of his household was about to scold a servant for having made him wait, the King said, " leave him alone, he already " suffers sufficiently." Another having hurt him as he was dressing, he said to him without any anger," bring me some- " thing to heal it." One of his valets-de-chambre asking him to recommend to the judges a cause which he was carrying on against his father-in-law, said to him, " Sir, you have " only to say one word:" " That is not the difficulty," answered the King; " but tell me, if you were in the place of " your father-in-law, would you wish me to say that word."* This saying really does honour to Lewis, and indeed might serve as a maxim to all kings, who are importuned to do a private favour at the public expense. Many other sayings have been recorded, by which he endeavoured to increase the favours that he bestowed, or to relieve the pain of those who had been unfortunate in his service. When the Duke of la Rochefoucauld complained of being pressed by his creditors,

* Choisy, vol i. p. 32.

he said to him, " why do you not speak to your friends?" and sent him a large sum to pay his debts. The Marquis d'Uxelles having been obliged to surrender Mayence, after a siege which, although extremely honourable, was yet criticised by the courtiers, Lewis said to him: " Your defence " proves your courage, and your capitulation your talents."*

Every one knows that he said to James the Second, upon his embarking for England, " I must wish never to see you " again;" and that, on taking leave of Philip the Fifth, he pronounced the famous words, " There are now no longer " Pyrenees." This skill in always choosing the right phrase, the grace and affability of his manner, the kindness with which he tempered dignity, have been attested by his enemies as well as his admirers. It was this external polish, contrasted with the harshness of his ministers, that made the Doge of Genoa say, during his humiliating mission: " The " King takes away our hearts, but his ministers give them " back to us."

There is no act of decided cruelty that can be imputed to Lewis; but his behaviour to Fouquet and Lauzun must be allowed to have the character of unjust severity. Fouquet, who had been condemned by his judges to banishment for peculation, to which he had been originally tempted by Mazarin, was imprisoned by the King's order in a fortress, where he seems to have remained the whole remainder of his life.† Lauzun, after being raised by the King from the sta-

Fouquet aud Lauzun.

* Choisy, t. i. p. 32.

† A passage of Gourville is quoted, to shew that Fouquet was at liberty before he died; but had the fact been so, his relations would have known and published it.

tion of a private gentleman, to the highest honours, and having even received permission to marry Mademoiselle, the King's cousin, was sent, without any manifest offence, to the same fortress of Pignerol, where Fouquet was confined. The behaviour of this person, may indeed have afforded grounds for a dislike on the part of Lewis, but his former transgressions had been pardoned, and ought to have been forgotten.* It may be here mentioned, however, that upon a particular occasion, the behaviour of Lewis towards Lauzun, was at once so dignified and so temperate, that St. Simon reckons it the finest action of his life. Lauzun called upon the King to perform his promise of making him master of the artillery, and upon his refusal, turned his back, broke the blade of his sword with his foot, and cried out in a passion, "that he never "would serve a prince who had so shamefully broken his "word." The King opened the window and threw out his cane, saying, that he should be sorry to strike a man of rank. Lewis in this instance certainly shewed great command of temper, but his remark might have been more liberal and more humane. It would have been unbecoming in him to have struck any man, though not of rank.†

Ignorance of Lewis.

Lewis was throughout his life an ignorant man. His education in this respect had been purposely neglected by Cardinal Mazarin. La Porte, his first valet-de-chambre, informs

* St. Simon, so fertile in court anecdotes, relates a story of Lauzun hiding himself under Madame de Montespan's bed, and afterwards reproaching her with the conversation he had heard her hold respecting him to the King. The offence was a gross one, but surely not sufficient to justify many years of imprisonment.

† St. Simon, vol. x. p. 129. See also J. J. Rousseau's remarks on this scene, in his Letter to d'Alembert, Sur les Spectacles.

us that he used to read to the King, when in bed, the History of France, by Mezerai;* and that the King took much interest in these readings; but that the Cardinal, upon discovering one evening what was passing, was much displeased, and said La Porte was acting as tutor to the King. We might have some doubts as to the truth of the narrative of so decided an enemy to Mazarin as La Porte, were not his testimony confirmed by Lewis himself. In relating the events of the year 1666, when he was nearer thirty than twenty, he takes occasion to inform his son, that, at that time, he began to read history, because he thought it a disgrace not to know what the greater part of the world knew.† It does not appear however, nor is it likely, that, after that age, and in the course of a busy life, he made any great progress in knowledge. Of ecclesiastical history and theology, he seems to have been totally ignorant. His limited information in this respect is the more to be regretted, as his religious zeal, unenlightened by knowledge, produced some of the greatest calamities of his reign. Indeed, it is singularly unfortunate that his piety was not less fatal to his people than his worldly passions, and that he did at least as much mischief to mankind, by his devotion to what he supposed to be the will of heaven, as by the indulgence of his illicit love, his ambition, and vain glory.

I cannot omit, in summing up the character of Lewis, what were perhaps, the most striking of all his qualities, his extreme pride and vanity. These passions were so conspicuous in him, that even his descendant, Lewis the Sixteenth, pro- His pride and vanity.

* La Porte, p. 182.

† Œuvres de Louis XIV. vol. ii. p. 225.

nounced them to be the great defect of his character.* To his pride must be attributed much of his political conduct, his quarrels with Spain and Rome about precedence, and in part the war against Holland, in 1672. His vanity, on the other hand, made him delight in the extravagant praises that were bestowed upon him, and believe in the most insincere panegyrics of his courtiers. He listened with rapture to the operas in which his own feats were celebrated, and could be seen to repeat, between his teeth, the words of the stanzas which were most full of adulation. He even sung in private, (though he had neither ear nor voice for music) the parts of lyric poems which abounded in exaggerated description of his actions, and when he did so, his eyes were filled with tears.† This well known quality of Lewis exposed him to the ridicule of his enemies. Prince Eugene, upon taking a town in Flanders, caused to be repeated before him the most fulsome prologues of Quinault, in the presence of some French officers; and William the Third, upon hearing some singers on the stage begin an ode in his praise, rose, and

* Œuvres de Louis XIV. t. iii. p. 20. "When Lewis the Sixteenth," says General Grimoard, "ordered me to prepare an edition of the Works of Lewis "the Fourteenth, he told me that I must not conceal his errors or his faults; that, "for instance, he had formed for himself an exaggerated notion of greatness, "which kept him in a continual and almost theatrical representation; that on the "other hand, flattery had rendered him vain; and that as the work with which "he entrusted me, was destined for the instruction of the human race, he would "be much obliged to me, if I would point out these defects, and shew how much "greater Lewis the Fourteenth would have been, if, instead of pride, which makes "men ridiculous, he had possessed real elevation and dignified simplicity." The sentence I have here abridged, does great honour to Lewis the Sixteenth.

† St. Simon, vol. i. p. 33.

cried out, " turn out those people; do they take me for the " King of France ?"*

It must at the same be confessed, that Lewis was pursued by flattery in a manner, that was difficult for any man to resist, and which affords much excuse for his faults of every description. One or two of the most extraordinary effects of the common and general spirit may be worth relating. In 1666, La Feuillade, a private gentleman, hearing that St. Aunay, a person who had left the kingdom from discontent, had written a letter, and afterwards adopted a device, disparaging to the King of France, went to Madrid and sent him a challenge: upon which St. Aunay made an apology for his conduct.† This gallantry of adulation being found extremely acceptable, the same person erected a statue to Lewis on the Place des Victoires. The statue was inaugurated, or rather consecrated, with music and genuflections: La Feuillade went three times round it, at the head of the regiment of guards, making the same prostrations that were made by the Romans before their deified emperors: the event was celebrated by illuminations; the inscription placed on the base was, " Viro immortali;" and the author of this pompous flattery intended to have kept a lamp burning there by day as well as by night.‡ The lamp, however, was ordered not to be lighted in the day time, and an image of the virgin, veiled in some degree the gross idolatry of the original intention. After the defeat of Marshal Créqui in 1675, the same La Feuillade came post to Versailles, where he went directly to the King, and said, " Sire, some " make their wives come to them to the army; others come to

Flattery of the court.

* Voltaire Siècle de Louis XIV. † Œuvres de Louis XIV., t. ii. p. 193.

‡ Choisy, l. ii. p. 9.

" see them; for my part, I come to see your Majesty for an " hour, and thank you a thousand and a thousand times; I shall " see no one but your Majesty, for to your Majesty I owe every " thing." He talked for some time, and then said, " Sire, I " am now going; I beg you to make my compliments to the " Queen, to the Dauphin, and to my wife and children." He then set off on his return to the army, and left the King much pleased with his adroit flattery.*

It may be useful, however, in a moral view, to record the result of this exquisite and inimitable adulation. La Feuillade was left for many years without any reward; at length he received the highest honours, and was made a Duke. He did not enjoy these honours long, however, dying the same year with Louvois. Some time afterwards the King was sitting at supper at Marly, with some ladies; the Count de Marsan was speaking behind the table of the great things his Majesty had done at the siege of Mons. " It is true," said the King, " that was a lucky year for me; I got rid of three " men I could no longer bear, M. de Louvois, Seignelay, and " La Feuillade." " Why then," said the Duchess of Orleans, in her blunt way, " did you not dismiss them?" The King looked down on his plate, and Monsieur de Marsan stammered something about persons disagreeable to the King, and yet useful to the state.†

One or two more instances of this gross flattery may be mentioned. When Lewis was old, he was complaining to the Cardinal d'Estrées that he had no longer any teeth." " Ah Sir," said the courtier," who has any teeth?" displaying at the same time, by a broad grin, a mouth well provided with the strongest

* Sevigné, 15 August, 1675. † Choisy, t. ii. p. 95.

grinders. Another member of the clergy, the Abbé, afterwards Cardinal de Polignac, walking one day with Lewis in the gardens of Marly in a splendid dress, a shower of rain came on. The King observed he would get wet. "Sire," said the Abbé, "the rain of Marly does not wet." The bishop of Noyon founded a prize at the academy for a panegyric in perpetuity upon Lewis the Fourteenth. The academy itself, however, was not behind hand in adulation. Upon the death of Corneille, there was some question of electing the Duke of Maine. The academy sent him a message by their secretary, that even if their number were full, there was not one of their body who would not willingly die to make room for him.*

Of all kinds of praise, however, the most grateful to the royal ear, must have been that which flowed from the pulpit. What "sweet oblivious antidote," could so tend to lay asleep the conscience of Lewis, as to hear his eulogy issue from from those lips that were consecrated to the service of God; what flattery so insidious, as that which flows from a tongue which is sworn to pay no respect to persons? Of this species of adulation, Lewis received an ample homage in the eloquent language of Bossuet. Speaking of the talents of the Duchess of Orleans, he says, "But why dilate upon a subject "where every thing can be said in one word? The King, "whose judgement is a certain rule, has valued the capacity "of the princess, and placed it by his esteem above all "our praises."† In describing the death of the Queen as inevitable, he says, "What could so many faithful servants "assembled round her bed do to save her? What could the Bossuet.

* Esprit du Mercure de France, t. i. p. 84.

† Oraison Funèbre de la Duchesse d'Orleans.

"King himself do?"* In extolling the conquests and bloody wars of his master, he exclaims, "If the French can do "every thing, it is because the King is every where their cap- "tain."† "After the King was deprived of these two great "commanders (Turenne and Condé), we see him conceive "greater designs; execute greater things; rise above himself; "surpass both the hopes of his subjects, and the expectations "of the universe; so high is his courage, so vast his intelli- "gence, so glorious his destiny!"‡ Such was the tone of the sermons, of the funeral sermons of Bossuet. It is impossible to carry adulation further than this. To tell Lewis that he was a great general, was the manner of all others to captivate, and the bishop of Meaux must be allowed to be the most skilful of all his flatterers. Yet our admiration of the address of the supple courtier, must give way to our indignation at the servility of the Christian bishop. Bold must be the impiety, or grovelling the soul, or strong the delusion of that man, who can venture to adulterate the spiritual food he is ordained to distribute, and pervert, to the purposes of human ambition, the oracles of eternal justice. Scarcely, indeed, was it possible that any man should resist falsehoods from such a mouth, and so administered. The perpetual repetition of such language as I have quoted, must in time have corrupted the strongest mind, and rooted out every trace of humility from the heart to which it was addressed. Thus it is, that Kings come in time to lose all sympathy with human nature; they imagine themselves a kind of

* Oraison Funèbre de Marie Th. d'Autriche.

† Oraison Funèbre de Marie Th. d'Autriche.

‡ Oraison Fuènbre du Prince de Condé.

superior being, and are fully persuaded that the sacrifice of interest, happiness, and even life in their behalf, is no more than what is justly due to the rank in which God has placed them. No wonder then that Lewis always obliged the persons around him to obey his slightest inclination, at the risk of their health, or with the loss of their whole fortune: he was taught that he was the special favourite of heaven, and he expected to be treated as a delegate of God.

CHAPTER II.

Absolute Power of Lewis. The Provincial States. The Parliament. The Nobility. The Army. The Church. Etiquette. The Court. Versailles and Marly. Madame de la Valliere. Madame de Montespan. Madame de Maintenon. Manners of the Court during the reign of the three favourites. Poisoning.

In the last Chapter we have taken a view of the personal qualities of Lewis the Fourteenth. It is now time to consider the nature of the power he enjoyed, and the use he made of it during his long reign.

Absolute power.

Lewis was from the year 1660, to his death, totally absolute and unlimited in the exercise of sovereignty. Every assembly or body, which had formerly been a check upon the royal prerogative, was humbled or annihilated. The States General had never assembled since the year 1614, and they had at that time been productive of so little advantage to the country, that there was not the slightest wish for their revival.

Provincial States.

In those provinces called *pays d'états*, the States continued to be assembled, but having no concert with the rest of the kingdom, and indeed no desire for freedom, their assemblies were rather occasions for granting money, than for discussing grievances; their meeting and dissolution were attended with pomp and parade, but, with no real utility to the country.

As an instance of the manner in which these assemblies were held, I may refer to a description of one of the meetings of the States of Brittany in a letter of Madame de Sevigné.

After a very lively account of a great dinner, and the drinking of healths, she says, "The States will not be long: there is "only to ask what the King wishes; not a word is said, and "all is over. As for the governor, he finds, I know not how, "that more than 40,000 crowns come to his share. An infi- "nite number of presents, of pensions, repairs of roads and "of towns, fifteen or twenty great tables, continual play, eter- "nal balls, plays three times a week, a great show; such are "the States. I forgot, however, three or four hundred pipes "of wine that are drunk; but if I forgot it, others do not, and "it is the principal thing."* Her subsequent accounts tally completely with this short description; we find immense presents given at the conclusion of the assembly, and a remark made by a by-stander, that he supposes the States are about to die, and are making their will, as they are disposing of all their property. Two thousand louis were given to the Duchess of Chaulnes, the wife of the governor, and in one morning the presents voted by the States amounted to 100,000 crowns.† The behaviour of the States of Languedoc was still more servile. Completely subject to the episcopal body, they never hesitated to grant to the King subsidies which did not weigh upon themselves, and eagerly sought, in the favour of the court, a compensation for sacrifices which they obliged others to undergo. From them came the first experiment of a capitation tax, the obvious inequality of which is repugnant to all sound ideas of finance.‡

While such was the general conduct of the provincial states, their separation from one another rendered perfectly useless any occasional opposition they might make. If once or twice,

* Sevigné, 5th August, 1671, l. 122. † Ibid, l. 133. ‡ Duclos, t. i.

during the reign of Lewis, the states of one province, or the people of another, shewed symptoms of discontent, the monarch, supported by the rest of France, had strength fully sufficient to subsist without their revenues, and to suppress their partial and insulated insurrections. Thus Lewis, fortunate in every thing, derived as much advantage from the divided privileges of the subject, as from the concentrated power of the government.

The Parliament.

The parliament opposed as little resistance to the will of the monarch as the provincial states. In 1667, it was ordered that the parliament should, in the first place, register with obedience the King's edicts, and never make any representation or remonstrance, but in the course of eight days after. Six weeks were allowed for courts of justice at a distance. This edict was renewed in 1673,* and so exactly obeyed, that Lewis scarcely received a remonstrance from any court of judicature during the course of his reign. A representation from the parliament of Paris, in 1709, on the arbitrary and fraudulent alterations of the standard of gold and silver, which produced no effect,† may be quoted as a singular exception. In 1669, he even proceeded so far in his dislike to parliaments, as to revoke the privileges of nobility, which had been granted to the magistracy in 1664. But notwithstanding this edict, the custom subsisted of allowing nobility to all persons whose fathers had served twenty years,

* The words of the edict are; "We desire that our courts register purely "and simply our letters patent without any modification, restriction, or other "clause that may impede or delay their full and entire execution." Mably, Observations sur l'Histoire de France, l. viii. c. 6. note.

† Voltaire, c. 30.

or had died in any judicial office belonging to a superior court.*

His own notions of his authority.

Lewis was fully conscious of his own extent of power, and did not fail to build upon it the most lofty assumptions, and the most extravagant pretensions, to which a European monarch ever arrived. In writing for the instruction of his son, after dilating upon the danger and mischief of popular assemblies, he adds, "But I dwell too long upon a reflection "that may seem to you to be useless, or which, at most, can "only serve to make you sensible of the misfortune of our "neighbours, since it is certain that, in the state where you "are to reign after me, you will find no authority that will "not esteem it an honour to derive from you its origin and "its character; no assembly, whose opinions will dare to go "beyond the terms of respect; no company, which will not "believe itself obliged to place its principal greatness in the "good of your service, and its only security in its humble "submission."†

He had the same unbounded notions with respect to the right of property. In addressing his son on the subject of the property of the church, he says, "You must, in the first "place, be persuaded that Kings are absolute masters (*seig-*"*neurs absolus*), and HAVE NATURALLY THE FULL AND FREE "DISPOSITION OF ALL THE PROPERTY THAT IS POSSESSED, "AS WELL BY THE CHURCH AS BY LAYMEN, TO USE IT AT "ALL TIMES AS WISE MANAGERS, THAT IS TO SAY, ACCORD-"ING TO THE GENERAL WANTS OF THE STATE."‡ Notwithstanding this positive language, it is said that Lewis felt

* Voltaire, c. 60. † Œuvres de Louis XIV. vol. ii. p. 28.

‡ Œuvres de Louis XIV. vol. ii. p. 121.

scruples when, in his latter years, it was proposed to him to levy as a tax, the tenth of all the revenues of the kingdom. Le Tellier offered to consult the casuists of his society. In a few days he returned, and told his master he need have no scruples, since he was the true proprietor of all the lands and goods in the kingdom. "You have relieved my mind," said the King, "I am now easy."* In the former instance, Lewis spoke as an absolute monarch; in the latter, as the slave of the monks.

In a course of the public law of France, drawn up under the direction of Torcy for the perusal of the Duke of Burgundy, we find this commencement: "France is a monarchical "state in the utmost extent of the term. The King repre- "sents the whole nation, and every other person represents "only a single individual with respect to the King....The "nation does not exist as a body in France. The whole "nation resides in the person of the King."† Lewis expressed this last maxim in two words, by saying, in answer to a magistrate who spoke to him of the state, "I am the state." "*L'état c'est moi.*"

The Nobility.

The next question that excites our curiosity, is to know how Lewis contrived to preserve his immense power without being disturbed, during his long reign, by any serious insurrection. How was it that, omitting the mad attempt of a Chevalier de Rohan, whom no one seconded, and the troubles

* Duclos, t. i.

† "La France est un état monarchique dans toute l'étendue de l'expression. "Le Roi y représente la nation entière, et chaque particulier ne représente qu'un "seul individu envers le Roi. La nation ne fait pas corps en France. Elle reside "toute entière dans la personne du Roi." Lémontey in the Nouveaux Mémoires de Dangeau, p. 327.

on the subject of the Protestants, of which he was himself the sole exciting cause, a general and passive obedience attended him in defeat as well as in victory, in poverty as well as in prosperity, in the days of his humiliation, as in those of his glory? If the States-general and the Parliaments were neglected as unsuitable to the genius of the nation, yet what had become of that selfish and turbulent nobility, who, reduced as they had been by Richelieu, still were in strength sufficient to disturb and nearly overpower his minority? To solve these questions, we must first lay down as a general rule, that in order to make the French nation of that day live contented under their government, it was necessary to satisfy two kinds of vanity, the national, and the personal. A Frenchman of that time desired, and almost demanded with all the energy of his character, first, that the French nation should be distinguished from all other nations; and, secondly, that he himself should be distinguished, or have hopes of being distinguished, from all other Frenchmen. Lewis was formed by nature, as well as disposed from policy, to gratify both ambitions. It was to satisfy the first of these wants, that he entered into wars remarkable for their insolence of pretension, and assumption of superiority over the rest of Europe. If by the haughtiness of his language, and the violence of his aggressions, he roused the spirit of all foreign nations to oppose his arms, he, in the same degree, administered fuel to the pride of the French people, and excited them to the support of his throne. The splendour of his court, the encouragement given to the fine arts, the disdain with which the other powers of Europe were treated, the glitter and the glare which attended their King in whatever he did, and

wherever he went, were all subjects of lively gratification to France. By the protection given at the same time to the army and the church, poets, architects and sculptors, manufacturers and merchants, every kind of activity was set in motion, and the enterprizing genius of the nation found ample field for exertion and distinction.

To satisfy the personal vanity of the nobility, may be supposed to have been a more difficult task. The undertaking became the more necessary, and at the same time more delicate, as Lewis was determined to extinguish for ever that old factious aristocracy, which, during the reigns of his predecessors, had disturbed the kingdom, and shaken the throne.

The last person who maintained the state and dignity of the Épernons and the Joyeuses, was Villeroi, Archbishop of Lyons, who died in 1693. Long before this time, the character of the great nobility had entirely changed. Instead of being followed, as their ancestors had been, by a train of noble companions in the provinces, over whom they had far more authority than the King, the great lords of the court became entirely separated from the smaller nobility. The measures taken by Lewis in the beginning of his reign, the suppression of disorders, the strict execution of the laws, and the internal peace which followed, entirely dissolved the confederacy which had so long subsisted between the superior lords and their dependent gentry. Hence arose the distinctions of nobility of the court, and nobility of the provinces, not only separate in their lives, but jealous and hostile in their feelings towards each other. The nobility, or gentry of the country, remained at their castles without union, without influence, and

with no other occupations than to cultivate their lands, follow the King in war, con over their pedigree, and oppress their peasantry. The nobility of the court, on the other hand, were obliged to look for distinctions from the King, as the only source of illustration. It so happened, that the greater part of the old high nobility had been cut off by civil war, or the judicial carnage of Richelieu, and those who now held the first rank in the state, were by no means equally distinguished in blood. The Duke of Richelieu himself was descended from René Vignerot, servant, and player on the lute to the Cardinal, who gave him his sister in marriage, in reward for certain services of no honourable kind. Luynes, Brantes, and Cadinet, were three brothers, who had but one cloak, which they wore by turns when they went to the Louvre. Their father was a lawyer in a country town. The fortune of this family was astonishing: Luynes was made by Lewis the Thirteenth Duke of Luynes, and Constable; Brantes became by marriage Duke of Luxembourg; and Cadinet was created Duke of Chaulnes. The Duke of St. Simon, likewise, owed his illustration to Lewis the Thirteenth, of whom his father was a favourite:—in the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth one of his cousins was groom to Madame de Schomberg. La Rochefoucauld was descended from George Vert, a carcase butcher; the Neuville Villerois from a fishmonger, clerk of the kitchen to Francis the First. The illustration of the d'Estrées, dated from the middle of the fifteenth century; the Boulainvilliers, Boufflers, and Lauzuns, lived in a village in the sixteenth. The great grandfather of the Duke of Mazarin was an apothecary at Partenai. The Duke of Sully was descended from Maximilian de Bethune, who is treated as a man of no

note by Marshal Tavannes in his memoirs; his father, John de Bethune, was a Scotish adventurer.*

His Ministers.

As these Dukes and Peers, therefore, did not represent the old feudatories of the French crown, and consequently were not generally respected as their heads by the rest of the nobility, it was the more easy for Lewis to deprive them of any share of the royal power. In the fifty-four years which elapsed from the death of Mazarin to that of the King, with the exception of Marshal Villars, for a few months, the Duke of Beauvilliers was the only nobleman admitted to his council.† While he thus excluded his nobles, he augmented the greatness of his ministers, who, from the plain black dress, cloak and band, which had hitherto marked them, became to be all persons of consequence, imitating Richelieu and Mazarin in riches and splendour. But Lewis knew that he could depress as well as raise them; they were the creatures of his will, and the submissive organs of his pleasure. From this promotion of men of business to the highest offices of state, and the determination of Lewis to have the gaze of the world wholly fixed upon himself, there came to be certain families in which these offices seemed to be hereditary. Thus, Colbert, originally a creature of Mazarin, as I have before mentioned, was minister of finance; Colbert de Croissy, his brother, secretary of state for foreign affairs; Torcy, his nephew, the same; Seignelai, his son, minister of marine. In the same way Le Tellier, another creature of Mazarin, was chancellor; Louvois, his son, minister of war; Barbesieux, his grandson, the same. Thus

* These genealogies are taken from the Memorials of the Parliament against the Dukes and Peers, presented to the Regent Duke of Orleans; published in the Vie Privée de Louis XV. Appendix II. † St. Simon.

likewise Paul Phelippeaux de Pontchartrain, after being a clerk in the office of M. Villeroy, was made secretary of state by Mary of Medicis. He was succeeded by his younger son, who was followed by his son, the Duke of La Vrilliere, secretary of state for sixty-two years, during the reigns of Lewis the Thirteenth and Lewis the Fourteenth. He was again succeeded by his son, known by the name of M. de Chateauneuf, who died in 1700. His son, the Duke of La Vrilliere, took his place, and was followed in 1725 by his son, the Count of St. Florentin. Another descendant of the original Pontchartrain, after being minister of finance, and minister of marine, became chancellor, and left the marine to his son. The son of this last was M. de Maurepas, who had the singular fate of being in office under the Regent, and afterwards prime minister of Lewis the Sixteenth. In this patrimonial distribution of office, even the family of Fouquet was not omitted. M. de Belleisle, a grandson of Fouquet, obtained, by the favour of Boufflers, a place of considerable importance, during the life of Lewis the Fourteenth, and became a great personage under the reign of his successor.* Thus France had an hereditary ministry, as well as an hereditary king.

The army monopolized by the nobility.

In order to compensate to the nobility for the loss of all real power, the King of France reserved for them rank in the army, and the greater part of the benefices of the church. But in the army especially, all distinction was monopolized by the nobility. When war was proclaimed, they hastened to fill the commands allotted to them by their monarch, and their valiant spirit well obtained for them the high, but

* See an account of the ministerial families in the Essays of M. d'Argenson, t. i.

perilous honours of leading armies, and defending besieged towns. No sooner was a campaign announced, than Paris and the court were utterly deserted by all the nobility; and if one young man of rank staid behind, he was considered a singular, if not a disgraceful exception.*

It was indeed far more easy for Lewis to encourage and reward, than to moderate and restrain, the valour of his nobility. They still retained the spirit and restlessness of the old leaders of the Franks; to afford scope for their courage and love of enterprize, was even one of the chief objects of the monarch in entering upon his wars of ambition. "So many "brave men whom I saw in arms for my service," he says previously to his first war, "seemed to solicit me every hour, to "furnish matter for the employment of their valour."† All men of rank at this time, appear to have had commissions in the army; but till they rose to the rank of colonel, they did not advance by seniority, and were thus immediately under the influence of the King.

It must be confessed, that the monopoly of the army by the nobility, was an injustice to a great part of France, who were thereby debarred from the fair chance of promotion, to which their talents might entitle them. Yet the nobility comprehended by far the greater part of the gentry of the country, and the chief result of the practice was, to confine the command of the military force to the general aristocracy of the kingdom. It must be owned, likewise, that as long as the army was in the field, the nobles did their duty well; but as soon as the campaign was over, or peace was restored,

* See the Letters of Madame de Maintenon, and those of Madame de Sevigné, especially the remark of the latter on the Duke of Sully. † Œuvres de Louis XIV.

these brilliant heroes returned to the court, to receive from their king and their mistresses the meed of well-earned fame. As their love of action was one of the chief motives of Lewis for going to war, so likewise, to gratify their love of pleasure and pomp, was one of his chief occupations during peace. The tournaments, the galas, the plays, which he instituted, while they pleased his own pride and vanity, had likewise a politic end, which he himself has avowed in his instructions to his son. They brought his nobles near his person, and accustomed them to look for diversion, as well as for honour and fame, in the presence of their master. The useful hospitality, and powerful protection of the ancient castles, were exchanged for the diamond necklaces and glittering equipages of the modern court. The objects of ambition of a great lord, no longer consisted in the sway he held over his vassals, and his influence with the warlike cavaliers of his neighbourhood, but in the distinction he obtained among his equals in the drawing-room, and the smiles of a monarch, too happy to exchange a gracious manner against a formidable power.

The Church.

With respect to the Church, it was the custom to give benefices to the younger sons of noble families, who pleaded a real, or affected poverty. Until the year 1687, when Père La Chaise alarmed the conscience of the King on this subject, laymen even were allowed to hold benefices, and pensions on benefices. But at all times, nobility and family connection were the great reasons for bestowing preferment in the church.* The patronage in the power of the crown seems

* "I have read an enormous quantity of letters and petitions to ask for bene-
"fices. The necessity of restoring a ruined family, or of supporting brothers

to have been immense. The episcopal body was chiefly formed of the younger sons of the nobility. It is true indeed, that the court promoted Fenelon, Massillon, and Bossuet, who rose from the ranks of the people by their merit; but the prodigious amount of ecclesiastical preferment, enabled the King to chuse many of his bishops, and more active dignitaries, from among persons of learning and piety, without prejudice to the general purpose of influencing the nobility.

A large class of persons known by the name of Abbés, formed a singular and anomalous part of the church. An Abbé was a person who had received the tonsure, and belonged to one of the four orders of the church, inferior in rank to sub-deacons. This apparently humble situation was attended with great advantages. These members of the church might enjoy rich benefices; and they might also at any time renounce the profession, and marry, or enter the army. Indeed, many young men of family were both volunteers in the army, and servants of the altar; at once soldiers and clergymen, they left it to chance to decide whether their fortune might be pursued more advantageously in the military or the ecclesiastical line.* Even ladies were allowed to hold rich abbeys, and other lucrative preferment in the church.

" and nephews in the army, was urged in all. In a few, the virtues of the can-
" didate were mentioned, but always as a secondary consideration." Lémontey, 337.

* La jeunesse en entrant dans le monde prenoit le parti qui bon lui sembloit. Qui vouloit se faisoit chevalier; abbé qui pouvoit; j'entends *abbé à bénefice*. L'habit ne distinguoit point le chevalier de l'abbé, et je crois que le chevalier de Grammont étoit l'un et l'autre au siège de Trin. Mem. de Grammont, c. 2.

There were other means, however, still more curious than military commissions, rich benefices, and splendid entertainments, by which Lewis attached his nobility to his person. It so happened that at the period of his accession, nothing was esteemed of more importance than the vain science of etiquette. Two instances will shew the extreme value attached by the courtiers, and even by Lewis himself, to the honours and distinctions of the royal palace. Etiquette.

At the very beginning of the reign, a dispute broke out between the Countess of Soissons, Surintendante of the Queen's household, and the Duchess de Navailles, first *Dame d'Honneur*. The office of *Surintendante* being of new creation, the limits of the rights of each had never been accurately fixed; Lewis, to settle the dispute, decreed that the Surintendante should present the napkin, and likewise the shift, and that the *Dame d'Honneur* should have precedence in the carriage, and a choice of apartments. The Duchess of Navailles, *Dame d'Honneur*, conceived herself so much injured by this decision, that she asked permission to resign and leave the court. The King, to console her, gave an explanation, that if she had begun the service at dinner, she should not be obliged to give up the napkin to her rival. He also represented to her the extreme importance of having the first place in the carriage. As for the choice of apartments, to which more vulgar disputants would have attached great importance, neither of the ladies seem to have thought of it a moment. The Countess of Soissons, in her turn, felt herself wronged by the explanation. She was so much hurt, that she obliged the Count of Soissons to send a challenge to the Duke of Navailles. The Duke of Navailles, however, refused to meet

him, not because the subject did not deserve it, but because the King had prohibited duels.

A more serious occasion, in which Lewis shewed the very great importance he himself attached to etiquette, happened in 1666, when his brother, the Duke of Orleans, requested that the Duchess, his wife, might have a chair with a back to it, in the Queen's presence. " The friendship I had for him," says Lewis, " would have made me wish never to deny him " any thing, but seeing of what consequence this was, I in- " stantly gave him to understand, with all possible mildness, " that I could not satisfy him on this point."* The anxiety and disappointment shewn by the Duchess of Orleans on this subject, was such as to lead to a first, but long and almost irreparable coolness between the brothers. Yet so confirmed was Lewis in his opinion of the justness of his decision, that in his instructions to his son, he speaks of the right of having at court a chair with a back to it, as one of the " principal advantages" of royalty, as belonging to the pre-eminence which forms the " principal beauty" of his station; and even as one " of the number of the rights of the crown, " which never can be legally alienated."† How profound!

By means of the value thus affixed to these vain distinctions, Lewis had the skill to form a new magazine of patronage, which, without costing him any thing, excited the desires, occupied the attention, and satisfied the ambition of the dukes and peers of France. By carefully avoiding to make the laws of etiquette too clear, he contrived to have continual appeals to himself; and the most solemn rights of precedence, as that great worshipper of forms, the Duke of

* Œuvres de Lewis XIV. t. ii. p. 64. † Ibid. p. 66.

St. Simon has complained, were at last almost as much subject to the will of the King, as the lives and properties of the people.

When Lewis had once established the opinion, that he was the unlimited lord of the greatest monarchy of Europe, the slightest marks of favour became objects of ambition to men who, like the French, are eager for all reputation. It is for this reason we find, in the memoirs of Dangeau, an assiduous courtier, far more notice of the disputes for little honours at Versailles, than of the rise and fall of the state, the happiness or misery of the nation. Two of the most illustrious nobility contend for the honour of giving the King his cloak. An old courtier solicits the permission to have the *entrée*, or admittance to the royal apartment at certain hours. He alleges a ground of claim to that extraordinary fortune. It is rejected. He advances another plea which he hopes may be valid. It is rejected. He advances a third plea, with a trembling anxiety and diminished hopes, when the King graciously admits the reason to be good, and crowns his enterprize with success. The King, from some accident, requires a fresh hat when he is out walking. The hat is brought by a person called a *portemanteau*, but the object is by no means accomplished. A dispute arises, which of two high officers of state is to present the hat to the King. The Duke of Tresmes presents it: the Duke of La Rochefoucauld complains, and this grave matter disturbs an old friendship, and destroys the peace and tranquillity of the court.*

In 1661 Lewis made a promotion of eight prelates, and sixty-three knights of the order of St. Esprit, which had not

* Dangeau, Lémontey, 4 Nov. 1706.

received any new knights since 1633, and seems to have fallen into neglect, if not contempt.

On this occasion the King remarks, in his instructions to his son, that " no recompence costs less to our people, and " none touches hearts that are rightly constituted, more than " these distinctions of rank, *which are almost the first motive of* " *all human actions,* but especially of the greatest and most " noble ; it is, besides, one of the most visible effects of our " power to give, when we please, an infinite value to that " which in itself is nothing."* It is indeed one of the most surprizing instances of the power of kings, and the fatuity of subjects! On the same solid grounds, the King afterwards created a new order, and called it by his own name. The *just-a-corps à brevet,* was another and very peculiar invention for distinction. It was a coat or jacket of blue, embroidered with gold and silver, similar to one used by the King, which entitled the wearer to accompany his Majesty in his promenades at St. Germain, and to belong to his parties to Versailles or Marly. One of these brevets signed by Lewis, and countersigned Guenegaud, is preserved in the collection of the works of Lewis the Fourteenth.† Only a certain number were allowed; and on the death of a member, his jacket became as great a subject of contention, as the armour of Achilles in the Grecian army. This desirable distinction seems at bottom to have been a hunting coat.

* Œuvres de L. xiv, t. i. p. 143.

† The editor says, there was no further question of them after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1679. This does not appear to be the case. St. Simon talks of seeing the sons of the Dauphin dressed in them; and Dangeau mentions the death of a person who had the *just-a-corps rose,* long after the period mentioned. The distinction of *just-a-corps bleu,* and *just-a-corps rose,* is a mystery which my researches do not enable me to explain.

A more important honour was that of having the *entrées*. There were three principal classes of these, the great *entrées*, the little *entrées*, and the *brevets d'affaires*, which was something less than the *entrées* of the gentlemen of the chamber, but greater than any other. But we shall understand this better, by giving a moment's attention to the day of Lewis in the later years of his greatness. At eight o'clock the valet-de-chambre, who slept in his room, waked him. The first physician, the first surgeon, and the nurse came in together; the two former rubbed him. At a quarter past eight, the great chamberlain and the *grandes entrées* came in: they staid only a minute. One of these opened the curtain, gave holy water, and a prayer book. When the King had said his prayers, the same persons returned, and gave him his dressing gown. After this the *secondes entrées* came in; then all persons of distinction; then all the court; by this time he was putting on his boots or shoes. When he was dressed, he prayed in public at the foot of his bed. He went into his cabinet with those who had the *entrées*, gave orders for the day, and saw those whom he wished in private audiences. After this he went to mass; in going and returning any one might speak to him, provided only that the captain of the guards was first informed. After mass, a council was held, except on Thursdays and Fridays. Dinner was at one o'clock; The King dined alone, and always *au petit couvert*, or *très petit couvert*; either of these consisted of three courses, besides fruit. The great chamberlain, or the first gentleman of the chamber, served the King. Every one present stood except Monsieur, to whom the King

Arrangement of the day.

always offered a chair. The Dauphin and other princes stood. The *grand couvert*, disused in the latter part of the reign, was a more magnificent spectacle. To see the King eat, seems to have been one of the rights and privileges preserved, though rarely enjoyed, by the great nobility and gentry of France. Every one could not look on this show with the philosophy of Madame de Sevigné, who says, " I have seen this scene. The " King and Queen eat in a melancholy way (*tristement*). Ma- " dame de Richelieu* is seated, and then the ladies according " to their dignities, some seated, the others standing; those " who have not dined, are ready to snatch the dishes; those " who have, are suffocated by the smell of the meat; " so that the company is all in a state of suffering."† Neither the presence nor the suffering of the courtiers, however, spoilt the appetite of the King. " I have often," says the Duchess of Orleans, " seen the King eat four plates of soup, a " whole pheasant, a partridge, a large platefull of salad, mutton " with gravy and with garlic, two good slices of ham, and a " plate full of pastry, besides fruit and sweetmeats."‡ After dinner, the King retired for a short time to his room, and then went out hunting, or shooting, which he was very fond of, and indeed found necessary for his health. He always went to a stag hunt once a week, and at Marly and Fontainebleau much oftener.

In his younger days he was very fond of play. Latterly, his evening was spent in the room of Madame de Maintenon. Towards nine o'clock, while the King was doing business with his ministers, or conversing, two waiting maids came to

* Dame d'Honneur to the Queen.

† 22d January, 1674, t. 285.

‡ Mémoires de Madame, p. 51.

undress her. When she was in bed, the King spoke to her for a short time, till his captain of the guards appeared at the door, and told him supper was ready. He then shut the curtains of her bed and went to supper.

The supper was always *au grand couvert*, with music; at Versailles none but his own family sat down; at other places the ladies of the court. The most distinguished of the nobility and courtiers attended. After supper he spent an hour with his family; he then wished them good night, which was a signal of a fresh beginning of an audience of the *grandes et petites entrées* called the *coucher*. When these persons had done discussing business, and he had finished undressing, he got to bed. Thus concluded the day between twelve and one o'clock.

To any person not brought up in harness, a life spent so entirely in company, so many hours devoted to persons whom it was impossible, however desirable, to exclude, and the entire want of privacy and ease, would be insupportable. Lewis the Fourteenth is one of the few men to whom continual representation was agreeable. He was, as Bolingbroke truly said, the best actor of Majesty that ever filled a throne. No part of the state ceremony was without its purpose; and in the course of a day spent altogether in public, he found numberless occasions of distinguishing the courtiers who best pleased him. Among others the *tabouret de grace*, or permission for a lady to sit upon a stool in the Queen's presence, was a matter which then, as in the time of the Fronde, was a spring to the most lofty ambition, and occupied the talents of the most powerful and able men in France. A place in the King's or Queen's carriage was another dis- Distinctions.

tinction, which occasioned as many jealousies and heart-burnings as the stool itself. The King often used this favour, as a means of satisfying those whom he had otherwise offended or neglected. "A place in the carriage," says Madame de Sevigné, "is a consolation for every thing."

All these minutiæ, all these genera and species of favour, were the wheels and pullies by which the great machine of government was moved. We no longer see the nobles retiring to their strong holds, fortifying their towns, and threatening insurrection. In times of danger they were employed in the army, and found a vent for their high spirit in the perils and glory of war. In time of peace, and during the interval between the campaigns, these same brave and adventurous men trembled at the aspect of their King, pined at his frown, and died with his displeasure.* The artificial smiles, and shadowy distinctions of a vain court, were the objects of the only men in France who had any natural importance. Even St. Simon, a man of keen and satirical humour, of sharp observation, and rigid morality, who is so capable of destroying the illusion of the court of the great monarch, who leaves no person unsatirized, no weakness respected, spent the greater part of his career in a struggle to procure for the *Ducs et Pairs* of France, a precedence over the illegitimate sons of Lewis. When he at one time gained his point during the Regency, and obtained a decree according to his wishes, he thus describes the sensations he experienced: "Impres-
"sed with all that joy can give, of what is most keen and
"most exhilarating, with the most delightful emotion, with the

* St. Simon attributes the death of the Prince de Conti to his being in disgrace at Court. He says the same thing of Boufflers, but with less apparent reason.

" gratification of my most fervent desires, I burnt with anguish " at being obliged to restrain my transport; and this anguish " itself, was a delight which I have never experienced either " before or after this great day. How inferior the pleasures " of the senses are to those of the mind!" Who would imagine that this able man was here describing the feelings produced by an edict, which ordered that the President of the Parliament should no longer take off his hat to the illegitimate sons of Lewis the Fourteenth!

There is one anecdote, however, that might make us suspect Lewis himself was not ignorant of the real value of what he gave. An officer applied for the cross of St. Lewis: the King told him he should have a pension instead. He replied that he would rather have the cross; " Yes," said Lewis, " I dare say you would." The Duke of Orleans smiled. The King afterwards called him into his cabinet, and said, " My nephew, when I say things of that kind, I beg of you " not to smile."*

The value of these distinctions is now lost. The admission to the dressing-room of Lewis the Fourteenth often decided the most weighty affairs; created a minister, or disposed of the command of an army. But a King is now obliged to look further for advice; he must in some measure, consult the interests and pressing wants of the people he governs; or at the least, he must balance parties, and weigh abilities. Whoever therefore wishes to be profound in the science of etiquette; to know what dignitary was entitled to put on a shirt, or hold a napkin for his master; what rights were obtained by sitting in the King's coach;

* Mém. de Besenval, t. i.

what precedence was due to a Cardinal, and what to a grandee of Spain, must study the history of the court of Lewis the Fourteenth. For my part, I shall conclude this part of my description of the government, by saying, with Madame de Sévigné, that the deepest metaphysical and theological enquiries, do not so exhaust and wear out the faculties, as a life spent in the study of these vain distinctions.*

There were many other distinctions, however, besides those created by etiquette, which could be conferred by the crown; and, in fact, there is no end to the list of favours which the King took upon him to bestow. Birth, marriage, funeral, succession, every thing was under the eye of the master. He interposed in all the most private concerns of his nobility; he enquired into the means of the old, the happiness of the married, the morals of the young. It must be said to the praise of Lewis, that upon the whole, he seems to have exercised this singular jurisdiction with much good sense, and not unfrequently, good feeling. He reconciled father and son, and often used the weight of his name to compose a domestic quarrel; thinking it both wise and right to appease, by his mediation, any difference that broke out amongst his nobility. For it appeared to him at once weak and dangerous, to encourage disputes which "disturb the ser-"vice of the crown, create parties, and force the sovereign to "undo for the sake of one, that which he had just done at the "suggestion of another."† His conduct in this respect seems to have been the reverse of the dark and disingenuous policy of Catharine de Medicis; both more prudent, and more virtuous. He conferred a favour with the happiest grace,

* Sévigné, April 6th, 1680. † Œuvres. ii, 191.

doubling his gifts by the manner in which he announced them; and he behaved to all ranks, especially to women, with a politeness which, in a sovereign, is of itself a virtue. Whenever he met a lady, or even a peasant girl, he never failed to take off his hat; and it was generally allowed that, in every circumstance, his manners were those of a perfect gentleman.

But if Lewis exercised his power over his court with urbanity and generosity, he yet took care that it should neither be neglected nor unfelt. If any one, not of a temper to act the part of a servant, omitted to go to court, Lewis debarred him from all promotion in any department of the state, saying, "I do "not know him." Nay, even those who were remiss in their attendance, were generally rebutted when they made any application for favour, with the remark, "He is a man whom I "never see."

Dependence of the Nobles.

Irksome, however, as the duty must have been, the nobility seldom exposed themselves to the reproach of a too sullen independence. Nothing could exceed the humble submission of their manners. Lewis having one day sent a footman to the Duke of Montbazon with a letter, the Duke, who happened to be at dinner, made the footman take the highest place at his table, and afterwards accompanied him as far as the court-yard, because he came from the King. The nobles indeed, not only accepted with gratitude the benefits, but even refined upon the omnipotence of the King. The Chevalier de Courcelle, who was tried and acquitted for a duel, went back to his prison, and refused to quit it till he had the King's permission.* Dangeau tells us of two noblemen, who upon

* Dangeau. Lémontey, 120.

succeeding to their fathers, asked the permission of the King, before they would assume the titles which they had inherited. The anonymous commentator of Dangeau, it is true, doubts these facts, but it is only because such steps were not necessary in law; a reason equally good for doubting the former fact of an acquitted person remaining in prison.

Anecdotes.

One or two incidents, however, that happened to Lewis, might have taught him the true value of the praise or approbation of the court. Early in his reign he took a fancy to make verses, and had composed one day a very indifferent madrigal. He shewed it to the Marshal de Grammont, saying at the same time, "Read, I beg of you, this little madrigal, "and see if you ever read so absurd a one: because people "know that I have lately taken to verses, they send me all "sorts of things." The Marshal, after reading it, replied, "Your "Majesty judges divinely of every thing; this is indeed, the "most foolish and ridiculous madrigal I ever read." The King laughed, and said, "Must not the author of it be an "absurd coxcomb?" "Sire, he can be nothing else!" "Thank "you," said the King, "for having spoken so fairly; I wrote "it myself." The Marshal begged to have it back, and declared he had read it hastily; but the King would not allow him, saying, "No, Marshal, the first impressions are always "the most natural."*

Many years afterwards the Count de Grammont gave a lesson to the King, with much more credit to himself. Lewis was playing at chess, and had a dispute with his adversary. He called up Grammont to decide it, who said at once, "Your Majesty is in the wrong." "How?" said the King,

* Sevigné, 22nd Dec. 1664.

" You have not looked at the game." "No," answered Grammont; " but is it not evident, that if there had been the least " doubt upon the subject, all these gentlemen standing by, " would have given it in your Majesty's favour ?"

He received a rebuke of a still more honourable kind from a nobleman who had long been ambassador at Constantinople. Lewis, after making him explain one day the power of the Sultans, could not conceal his wish for such despotism, and let drop some words, implying that these sovereigns must be immensely powerful, " Yes," said the ambassador, " but I " must likewise say, that I have seen three or four of them " strangled."

Expensive habits.

The dependence of the courtiers was greatly increased by the mode of living prevalent at Versailles. The fashions of the court, during the early part of the reign of Lewis, were expensive and ruinous to the greatest degree. It was common to lose three or four thousand pistoles at play. Madame de Montespan at one sitting lost four million of livres, equal to more than three hundred thousand pounds.* Men of rank and fortune were not unfrequently seen to pledge their carriages, their horses, their estates, and even their clothes.†

Dress and equipage were likewise heavy burthens upon the courtiers of Lewis; every one vying with his neighbour, in order to appear with splendour before the monarch. With these habits of expense it must not be wondered at, that the highest of the nobility, living at a distance from their estates, and taking no interest in the prosperity of their tenants and labourers, should frequently feel the pressure of poverty, and be obliged to resort to unworthy expedients to keep up the appearance of riches. In circumstances of embarassment they

* Sevigné, Dec. 18th, 1678. † Mém. de Gourville.

Cold policy of Lewis.

always had recourse to the King, and by the most humiliating supplications, endeavoured to recruit their shattered fortunes. Lewis listened with kindness to these petitions, but at the same time put an affected delay, and often an ostentation in his gifts, which rivetted the dependence of the suppliant noble. Not even his dearest friends were able to snatch from him any relief for their distress, till, by long patience and assiduous service, they had shewn that their existence hung on the breath of his favour. We have seen that the Duke of la Rochefoucauld was entitled a friend by Lewis himself; we have also seen that La Feuillade carried beyond any man of his day the chivalry of flattery. Yet the Duke of la Rochefoucauld had lived fifteen years in poverty, waiting for the reward of his fidelity, when he was suddenly raised from indigence to wealth; and La Feuillade was for a long time neglected and overlooked. The latter was complaining one day of this treatment to the mother of the Abbé de Choisy, when she replied, "You do not know the King; "he is the ablest man in his dominions; he does not choose "that his courtiers should give up the pursuit; he makes "them sometimes wait a long time, but happy are they whose "patience he exercises; he loads them with favours; wait "a little, and you will be rewarded." It happened as she said; La Feuillade obtained a provision far above his deserts. By this artifice, the courtiers of Lewis were kept in continual expectation, and if they found themselves long neglected, they had strong incitements to patience and submission in the persons of the chief flatterer, and dearest private friend of the King. Yet how cold must be the heart of that man who can keep his friend for many years in want, from motives of state policy!

The modes of providing for the servile nobles of the court, were many and various. Men of family who were poor, often received sums of money; others more in favour, were made governors of provinces and towns. Every place in the government was saleable; the permission to buy one was accounted a reward. Besides all other methods, personal chattels and real estates were often given by the King out of the goods of persons whose property had been confiscated, or of defaulters against whom they had informed. Even Monsieur, the King's brother, was not above receiving a present of this last kind. In short, gifts of all kinds were accepted with gratitude; and during the days of his prosperity, Lewis was courted by all as petitioners for the riches he could dispense. He saw but too well the interested motives of those around him, and he has consigned the dreadful caution to his son, always to recollect that every one who approached him had an object to gain, an interest in the advice he should give, and a motive for distorting the facts he might relate.

Pride of the Nobles.

With characters so little calculated to excite respect, the nobility of the court of France carried pride as far as any aristocracy in the world. Nothing was so much an object of their horror as a *mesalliance*, or the marriage of one of their noble shoots with a branch of a plebeian family. Count Bussy Rabutin had the inhumanity to carry on a lawsuit for many years to dissolve his daughter's marriage, at the risk of ruining her and bastardizing her issue, merely because she had chosen for her husband one who was not equally noble with himself. Another of these nobles, speaking of a union of this kind, exclaimed, " Better to have ten bastards, than one legitimate " child from such a marriage!" Every one has heard probably

of the aristocratic reply of Madame de la Meilleraye, to an observation, that a prince who had just died suddenly after a vicious life would scarcely be saved: "I assure you God "thinks twice, before he condemns persons of that rank!"*

They were carefully watched.

Before I leave this part of the subject, it may be right to mention that Lewis had a system of punishments for his nobility, fully as effectual, in its way, as the system of rewards. He exercised a severe inspection over his court. The place of Lieutenant of the Police, which under former governments had been no more than a superintendence of the watch and ward of the city of Paris, acquired a totally different character under the direction of Lewis the Fourteenth. La Reyniere was the first person who made this office of importance, but d'Argenson raised it much higher, and became in this situation one of the principal ministers of the King. He was the first who introduced *lettres de cachet* into the police; before his time, persons who had committed any disorder were arrested *par sentence,* which enabled them to obtain their enlargement by an appeal to the parliament.† The *lettres de cachet,* before this time, seem to have been reserved for state crimes, and issued only by the heads of the government, but by this innovation, all who offended the police, were subjected to arbitrary and indefinite imprisonment. To make this power truly formidable, it was the business of d'Argenson to enquire into the most private concerns of all the principal families of the kingdom. He has been praised by his son for the delicacy and kindness with which he exercised his duties, and saved the honour of many families; but however exercised, the power is one that ought not to exist in any

* Dangeau, L. p. 82.

† St. Simon, t. 9. Additions, p. 212.

civilized state. What man worthy of liberty, or indeed what man of spirit and honour, could bear with patience, that his family secrets should be at the disposal of an agent of the police, and then be obliged to express his gratitude that they are not allowed to go further? Besides the reports of d'Argenson however, formed of course on the report of spies and informers, Lewis had many other secret channels through which the opinions, views, and conversation of his courtiers reached him. There were some persons who reported to their friends, without knowing that their relations reached the King, others to Madame de Maintenon, and others to himself. He likewise directed the letters at the post office to be opened, and extracts to be made of any matter that might interest him; these were regularly laid before him. Thus provided with intelligence, Lewis was enabled to keep his courtiers in continual dread: they discovered, to their dismay, that the most profound external homage was insufficient to obtain the royal smiles, if in their hours of relaxation they by chance indulged in any light observations unfavourable to the divinity of the monarch; and many persons of merit and distinction found themselves suddenly stopped in the road of their promotion, and shut out from all posts of honour and of trust, without any conception how they had forfeited the good graces of their sovereign. Often he himself did not recollect the nature of their offence, but upon the person being mentioned for advancement, observed, "I have heard something against him; I "do not recollect what it was, but it will be safer to take a man "against whom I have not heard any thing." This was the first punishment inflicted on the courtiers; the second was an exile from court: the third, imprisonment in the Bastile. As

this last punishment is closely connected with the criminal jurisprudence of the kingdom, I shall reserve it for the same place; at present it will be sufficient to remark, that any one of these penalties might be, and was inflicted without due enquiry into the case, without examining the accused, and often upon the false information of a meddling gossip, or an envious rival.

Character of the nobility.

We may now, taking all the foregoing circumstances into consideration, form a tolerably correct notion of the French nobility of the age of Lewis the Fourteenth. On the one hand, they were the most polished gentlemen in Europe, the ornaments of a brilliant and witty society, remarkable for refinement of taste in their conversation, their letters, and in their judgments upon the literature of the day; the bravest of an army, where all were distinguished for their courage, and the most brilliant at a court, which gave the fashion to Europe. On the other side it must be said, that their military habits made them regardless of laws, and of the wise restraints of civil society; they asked from their superior no liberty, they granted to their inferiors no justice. With little learning, and no knowledge of business, they were only anxious to shine for a moment, and disappear; constantly incurring debts by negligence and extravagance, they relieved themselves by acts of meanness and dishonesty; regardless of the virtue of their wives, they were ever impatient to fight duels in defence of what they termed their honour. With many of the qualities of chivalry, their aim was not to redress wrongs and protect the weak, but to commit injuries with impunity, and act unjustly by privilege. Better a thousand times to have the imagination distorted like Don Quixote,

than to have the heart perverted like some of this vain and vicious nobility!

Grammont

It would be unfair to quote the Count de Grammont as a specimen of the race; yet his example may shew what was tolerated, and even admired in the French court. Distinguished by the gifts of high birth, a handsome person, and a ready wit, he found it convenient and profitable to throw off the restraints of morality, and dispense with the knowledge of religion. He notoriously cheated at play; was a beggar for the King's alms; and yet was always feared and courted in society. When he was dying, his wife, the celebrated Miss Hamilton, a woman of piety and character, was reading the Lord's prayer to him for his edification; "Countess," he said, "let me hear that again, it is a beautiful prayer; who "wrote it?"*

Consequences of the policy of Lewis.

From the moral degradation and political abasement of the nobility, sprung consequences of the utmost importance. The strength of society in modern nations, whether free or enslaved, consists in the knitting together of all orders of the state; in their constant union with, and dependence upon each other. But in France, the nobility were not consulted by the King, nor respected by the nation; they were the mere creatures of a court; its instruments in war; its ornaments in peace. The monarch indeed rejoiced in the sway he had obtained over the sons of those who had bearded his father; and even the people saw, with pleasure, the subjection of their petty tyrants; but neither the throne nor the nation were ultimately gainers by the insignificance of the aristocracy. When the people, raised by commerce and agriculture to importance, asked for the blessing of a free government, they

* Dangeau. L. p. 76.

had no leaders among the great proprietors of the land, to whose honesty and wisdom they could confide their cause: when the sovereign sought for a defence among his nobility against the assault of democracy, he found himself surrounded by a knot of men infatuated with their own birth and privileges; incapable of conducting a government for a day; determined not to make concessions when concession was unavoidable; despised or hated by the people; and totally divested of any quality fit to meet a revolution, but the courage to fight and die. Such were the consequences to his unhappy successor, of the selfish policy of Lewis the Fourteenth.

Versailles and Marly.

Intimately connected with the influence of Lewis over his courtiers, is the erection of Versailles and Marly. It is said that the day of the barricades, and another day of less public import, but more deeply felt, the day when he lost Madame de la Valliere, were the causes which induced Lewis to transfer his court to the country. But without such peculiar motives, we may easily suppose why the country should, in his eyes, be preferable to Paris. Lewis was fond of air and of the chase. It was well known that he suffered from vapours and head-ache if deprived of exercise, and that he could bear without complaining, a great degree of heat or cold. Nor does an absolute king gain any thing by confining himself in a town. A private person seeks in a capital the best society, the best theatres, the best news. But the King of France had all these things in his country house; the whole body of nobility; the ministers of state, the best plays and actors of the day. Thus at Fontainebleau, on one occasion, we find four pieces of Corneille, four of Racine, two of Moliere acted at the theatre of the court.*

* Sévigné. 30th August, 1675.

Whatever were his motives, however, Lewis established his court at St. Germain soon after the death of his mother. But not satisfied with this beautiful situation, he was soon seized with the ruinous passion of building; and having fixed upon Versailles, where his father had a small hunting seat, he began a palace there before the year 1670. The situation in the middle of the forest, was full of marshes to be drained, of hills to be levelled, and vallies to be raised. For a long time twenty-two thousand men and six thousand horses were employed in working there;* and the troops of the line were ordered to perform this disagreeable and unsuitable service. In 1680 the King transferred his court to the new palace, and in 1683 went to reside there entirely. All his friends and favourites, ministers, and ladies of the court, had apartments in the palace.†

Marly was built with the express intention of making a hermitage, where the King might retire for two or three nights at a time, with the few persons necessary for his service. But the love of grandeur got the better of the love of retirement; and the same work of moving ground and cutting rock took place there that had before transformed Versailles. The machine of Marly for raising water to the fountains, has been celebrated over the world as the most prodigious engine ever employed for a useless purpose. "I have seen," says St.

* Dangeau, l. 1684.

† It does not appear that all minds were captivated by the tasteless grandeur of Versailles. Madame de Sévigné says, speaking of a hill that had been embellished by a friend of her's, "Si cette montagne était à Versailles, je ne doute "point qu'elle n'eût ses parieurs contre les violences dont l'art opprime la pauvre "nature." 15th June, 1676. Some one gave Versailles the name of "le favori "sans mérite."

Simon, " large trees with their branches and leaves brought " from Compiegne and other forests; more than three quar- " ters died, and were immediately replaced by others. I " have seen entire avenues disappear in a moment, large mas- " ses of thick wood changed into lakes, where I have been " rowed in a gondola, and again turned into forests, which " made a thick shade from the day that they were planted. " I have seen basons changed into cascades, waterfalls into " still ponds, the dwellings of carps adorned with the finest " sculpture and gilding, and, when finished, converted again " into bowling-greens; and besides all this, the prodigious ma- " chine, with its immense aqueducts, and enormous conduits " and reservoirs." To all this, I can add that I have seen Marly, a narrow village confined by a hill on one side and the river on the other, looking upon a large plain of melancholy flatness, and bearing no vestige of having once been the seat of a monarch's magnificence. The whole building, and its accompaniments, have disappeared. Of all the works connected with the royal residences, however, the most gigantic and absurd, was the attempt to bring water to Versailles. As Lewis had committed the blunder of building in a place without water, he proposed to remedy his mistake by conveying the river eight leagues, by a new channel, to adorn his park. To accomplish this, it was necessary to join two mountains at Maintenon, and form an aqueduct. Forty thousand troops were employed in this great work,* and a camp formed expressly for the purpose. From the unhealthiness of the work or of the air, a great mortality ensued; the dead were carried away in the night time that their companions might not be discouraged; but the loss of

* Sévigné, 13th Dec. 1684.

many thousand lives to please the wanton caprice of a despot, excited no sympathy, and created no surprise. The war of 1688, however, interrupted the labour, and it was never afterwards resumed.

It was considered as a great favour to be allowed to accompany the King to Fontainebleau or Marly; and it was a grave fault not to ask for this favour, however little it might be desired. The journies to Fontainebleau were made at fixed times and seasons, and no consideration induced the King to postpone them. The health of his mistresses, of Madame de Maintenon, and his grand-daughters, was often seriously affected by undertaking this journey when they were indisposed, but Lewis pretended not to see, or if he saw, not to regard their complaints.*

Manners.

We come next to the subject of the manners of the court of Lewis the Fourteenth. Under a government so despotic as that of the French monarchy, the King has it in his power to give the tone to the manners of the age; for all the society of high rank being absorbed in that of the sovereign, where his smiles and frowns are rewards and punishments, his example forms a law, which is obeyed by all the inferior and provincial societies with as much obedience, as the articles of his civil and criminal code. To direct the morals of the nation, therefore, is a part of the administration of a monarch, placed as Lewis was, at the head of a people with whom admiration is a more powerful motive than fear, and where fashion has a greater influence than the doctrines of philosophy, or even the precepts of religion.

Mistresses.

The manners of the court partook of the character of the

* See an anecdote of the Duchess of Burgundy, in St. Simon.

sovereign, and varied with the ascendency of his different mistresses. While the Duchess of Orleans and Madame de la Valliere gave the tone to society, nothing was heard of but love and devotion; love, debased by the contaminating atmosphere of a court; and devotion, that seems to have been sought for, either as a relief to, or a retreat from a life of pleasure; either to give variety to the monotony of sensation, or as a decent veil to the approaches of age, and a tacit avowal of an incapacity for vice. With Madame de Montespan came pomp, splendour, rich dresses, and deep play; even the mistress herself, according to her own opinion, was a part of the royal furniture. "He does not love me," she said, "but he "thinks he owes it to his subjects and to his own greatness, "to have for his mistress the handsomest woman in his "dominions." With Madame de Maintenon arrived the reign of propriety and decorum; of misery, dullness, and hypocrisy. Let us take a short survey of each of these periods, and the manners which prevailed during the respective reigns of the three favourites.

Cardinal Mazarin, as the histories of that time relate, introduced the King to the society of his nieces. They were all persons of some talent, and one of them, the Countess of Soissons, has acquired a name notorious indeed, but less desirable than oblivion. Another of the sisters, Maria Mancini, is supposed to have gained a great influence over the heart of the King. The Cardinal seems at first to have looked on this passion with approbation; and one day mentioned it in a jesting way to the Queen mother, to see how she would answer. But she spoke so strongly of the disgrace of her son's marriage with such a person, even declaring that she would

Maria Mancini. Madlle. de la Motte.

make the kingdom rise both against the King and himself if the event should take place, that he was obliged to change his policy.* From that time he took every step to obstruct the intercourse between his niece and the King; and when negociations for the royal marriage were on foot, he obliged her to retire to a convent. At the separation, Lewis could not restrain his tears, which drew from the fair one the well known words, "*Vouz pleurez; vous êtes roi, et je pars.*" "You weep; you "are a king, and I go." Her pretensions to the King's affections had been also opposed in a different way, by a successful rival. Mademoiselle de la Motte d'Argencour far exceeded in beauty Maria Mancini, and the King, captivated by her charms, went so far as to offer her an establishment at court. Her mother informed the Cardinal, and offered, if he thought, that the proposal should be accepted, to inform him of all that should pass between the King and her daughter. The Cardinal thanked her, and directly told the King all the circumstances he could learn from the mother, pretending that the daughter had disclosed them to more favoured admirers. By this artifice the King was offended, and Mademoiselle la Motte went also to a convent. All other amours being for the time removed, the Cardinal occupied himself with the care of giving a Queen to the Kingdom. By the choice of Maria Theresa, he laid a foundation, first, for the acquisition of Flanders, and afterwards, for the inheritance of the whole Spanish monarchy.

The court spent the winter in the South of France, where the marriage took place. In the spring the King and Queen

* Motteville.

came to Paris, and the day of their entry afforded a spectacle both of pomp and pleasure to their subjects.*

The King, however, was not to be satisfied with the possession of a timid and embarrassed wife. The Queen, though a person of some beauty, and deeply in love with the King, led a life of retirement and devotion. Lewis frequented the society of Madame de Soissons, where the most agreeable conversation and polished society were found. His person had at this time a great degree of majesty, his carriage was noble, his look commanding, and it was popularly said, that his appearance alone pointed him out as king.† He excelled at all games and exercises, was graceful on horseback, and appeared with distinction at the tilting matches and tournaments, which were then the fashion of the court. He had a taste for magnificence, gallantry, and gaiety. It is no wonder, therefore, that he did not resist the attractions of the fair sex. Indeed for some years he led a life of extreme debauchery; ladies of rank, their maids and attendants, and even peasant girls of the neighbourhood, were the objects of his indiscriminate amours.‡ But the names of some of his mistresses are of historical importance. Not long after his marriage, he became sensible to the charms of Mademoiselle de la Valliere. He was likewise much struck with the

Madlle. de la Valliere.

* Among the spectators was Madame de Maintenon, then Madame Scarron, who, describing in a letter the grandeur of the sight, adds, "La reine dut se cou- "cher hier au soir assez contente du mari qu'elle a choisie." The phrase is remarkable enough; how little did she then dream of succeeding Maria Theresa.

† Every one knows the two lines of the Berenice of Racine, intended for the King:

Qu'en quelque obscurité que le sort l'eût fait naître,
Le monde en le voyant eût reconnu son maître.

‡ Mémoires de Madame, p. 46.

beauty of one of the maids of honour to the Queen; and Mademoiselle de la Motte Houdancourt received with pleasure the attentions of the monarch. But the Duchess of Navailles, who was entrusted with the charge of the maids of honour, refused to allow any facility to these amours. The King was angry: Madame de Navailles offered to give up her charge; and throwing herself at the King's feet, exclaimed, "I beseech you, Sir, seek elsewhere, and not in the Queen's "household, which is your own, for the objects of your plea- "sures and your inclinations; especially as you seem to have "already chosen, in the person of Mademoiselle de la Val- "liere."* The King still persisted; upon which the lady of the bed-chamber, hearing that persons had been seen on the roofs, placed bars of iron across all the windows which led to the apartments of the maids of honour. Lewis shewed no resentment, but deprived Madame de Navailles of the government of the young ladies, and soon after obliged both her and her husband to leave their offices. They were afterwards restored to favour, but not recalled to court.

Perhaps the first serious passion of Lewis was excited by Mademoiselle de la Valliere. She does not appear to have been exceedingly handsome, and was somewhat lame: a marvellous grace, a peculiar softness and gentleness of character, and above all, a most tender and unaffected love for the King,

* This last branch of the sentence is omitted by Anquetil. It certainly takes off somewhat of our notion of the stiff virtue of Madame de Navailles. Madame de Genlis has ingeniously made the story relate to Mademoiselle de la Valliere. The fact is, Madame de Soissons, and the enemies of Mademoiselle de la Valliere, favoured the King's inclinations for Mademoiselle de la Motte Houdancourt; but according to Madame de Motteville La Valliere prevailed by yielding sooner.

seem to have been her chief attractions. Notwithstanding her passion, she felt great scruple in yielding; and after her seduction, continually lamented and wept over her weakness. When told many years afterwards of the death of the Count de Vermandois, her only son by the King, she exclaimed with anguish, " Must I lament his death before " I have yet done lamenting his birth ?" Even during the height of her passion, she retired at intervals to the Carmelites to pray and do penance.* At one time, however, she laid aside her timidity and remorse, brought up publicly, her son and daughter by the King, accepted the title of Duchess, and during a journey to Flanders, when the Queen had ordered that no carriage should go before her, Madame de la Valliere crossed the fields and took the precedence. " For my part," said one of the ladies in the Queen's carriage, " God preserve me from being the King's " mistress; but if I were unfortunate enough for that, I never " should have the effrontery to appear before the Queen." The lady who spoke thus was the Marquise de Montespan, one of the ladies of honour, remarkable both for her beauty and her wit, and a great favourite with her mistress. She usually remained with the Queen in the evening when the King was absent. Not long after the speech just quoted, Lewis got the habit of talking to her when he came to the Queen's apartment, fell in love with her; and after a resistance said to have been obstinate, she became his mistress in all the dignity of that term. She had eight children by the King,

Madame de Montespan.

* Madame de Sévigné speaking of her in her letters, describes her as, " cette " petite violette qui se cachoit sous l'herbe, et qui étoit honteuse d'être mai- " tresse, d'être mère, d'être Duchesse; jamais il n'y en aura sur ce moule."

the eldest of them was the Duke of Maine, of whom we have had occasion to speak. Her manners were haughty and imperious, her style of conversation caustic and satirical, but remarkable for a peculiar grace and flavour, that belonged only to her sisters and herself, and was called in the world *l'esprit des Mortemar*. She was so much feared by the young courtiers, that walking under the window where she and the King were talking together, was called *passer par les armes* (being put to the sword). Yet she does not seem to have been malicious in her actions. Madame de la Valliere perceived, with the greatest pain, this new inclination of the King; yet she submitted to adorn with her own hands her proud successor, who cruelly continued to ask it, saying that nobody did it so well. Upon remarking one day the signs of tenderness between Lewis and her rival, this unfortunate victim could not refrain from saying, "when the life I lead at the convent of the Car-"melites appears too severe, I will think of the misery these "people have made me suffer." But even at the convent she was persecuted by her successful rival, who went to see her, and asked her if she was happy, and if she had any message to send to the brother of Monsieur.* Lewis, with a barbarity it is difficult to excuse, seems also to have enjoyed bringing his mistresses together, and forcing them into the company of the Queen. In the journey which he made in 1670, to shew the Queen the conquered towns, this poor princess was obliged to bear the presence of both the mistresses in the same coach with her.

La Valliere at length finally retired, and took the veil; no doubt her life in the convent was happier than her tribulations at court.

* Sévigné. April 26th, 1676.

The triumph of Madame de Montespan was accompanied by every circumstance of pride and glory. The whole court was at her feet ready to obey her wishes.* When she made a journey, she travelled with ten or twelve men on horseback, and a train of forty-five persons.† When in one of her excursions she passed by Moulins, a splendid boat was prepared for her with gilding, painting, and damask, and adorned with the cyphers of the kingdoms of France and Navarre.‡

The best description of the court of France at this period, is given in a letter of Madame de Sévigné; and, in despair of being able to abridge it without losing the freshness of the colouring, I venture to insert it entire.

Letter of Madame de Sévigné.

"I was on Saturday at Versailles with the Villars. You "know the toilette of the Queen, the mass, and the dinner; "but it is not necessary to stifle oneself while their Majesties "are at table; for at three o'clock, the King, the Queen, "Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle, all the princes and prin- "cesses, Madame de Montespan, all her suite, all the courtiers, "all the ladies; in short, what is called the court of France, "are in the beautiful apartment of the King, that you know. "The whole is admirably furnished; every thing is magnificent. "One does not know what it is to be hot; one goes from one "place to another without the least crowd. A game of "*reversi* gives the form, and fixes the situation of every thing. "The King is near Madame de Montespan, who holds the "cards; Monsieur, the Queen, and Madame de Soubise, "Dangeau and company, Langlée and company; a thousand

* Madame de Sévigné, speaking of a journey of Madame de Montespan, says, "Si elle avoit voulu mener tout ce qu'il y a de dames à la cour elle aurait pu "choisir." 6th May, 1676. † Ibid. 15th May. ‡ Ibid. 8th June.

" louis are on the table; there are no other counters. I saw " Dangeau, and I wondered to think how stupid we are at the " game in comparison with him. He attends to nothing but " his business, and gains where others lose; he neglects " nothing, and profits by every thing; he is never absent; in " a word, his good management defies fortune, so that two- " hundred thousand francs in ten days, a hundred thousand " crowns in a month, are entered as received in his book of " accounts. He said that I took part in his play, so that I " was very agreeably seated. I saluted the King, as you " taught me, and he returned my salute as if I had been young " and handsome. The Queen spoke to me of my illness, * * " * * * *, in short, *tutti quanti.* You know what it is to have a " word from every body one meets. Madame de Monte- " span spoke to me of Bourbon, and asked me to tell her about " Vichi. * * * * Seriously, her beauty is quite surprizing; her " figure is not half so large as it was, without having lost any " thing in her complexion, her eyes, or her lips. She was " dressed in *point de France;* her hair in a thousand ring- " lets; two locks fell down from her temples very low on her " cheeks; she had black ribands on her head, the pearls of " the *Maréchale de l'Hospital,* set off with locks of hair, and " pendants of diamonds of the greatest beauty; three or four " pins, no cap; in short, a triumphant beauty for the ambassa- " dors to admire. She knew that people complained that " she hindered all France from seeing the King; she has " given him back, as you see; and you would not believe the " joy that every body is in, and how beautiful it has made " the court. This agreeable confusion, without confusion, " consisting of all the best society, lasts from three till six,

" If couriers arrive, the King retires a moment to read his " letters, and then returns. There is always some music that " he listens to, and which has a very good effect. He con- " verses with the ladies who are accustomed to have that " honour. There is perpetual talk, and nothing remains " upon the mind.—' How many hearts have you ?'—' I have " three, two, one, four ;' then,—' he has only three, four.' Dan- " geau is enchanted with this talk ; he discovers the play of " others, and draws his consequences. I was delighted to see " his exceeding skill. At six o'clock the King, Madame de " Montespan, Monsieur and Madame de Thianges, go out in " an open carriage, and the *bonne* d'Heudicourt in the *stra-* " *pontin.* The Queen is in another with the princesses, and " the rest as they please. They go on the canal in gondolas, " have music, come back at ten, find a play, twelve o'clock " strikes, they have *media noche,* and so the Saturday is past.

" To tell you how many times I was asked about you ; how " many questions were put to me without waiting for an " answer; how many answers I spared myself; how little they " cared, how I cared still less ; all this will picture to you to " the life, the *iniqua corte.* However, it was never so agree- " able, and I hope it may continue. * * * *

* * * * * * * * * * *

" The world has been very unjust about the Brinvilliers ;* " never were so many crimes so mildly treated ; she has not " been tortured ; they were so much afraid she should speak, " that hopes were given her of a pardon, and so strong that

* The Marquise Brinvilliers was burnt for poisoning her father, brothers, and sister. Penautier, mentioned directly afterwards, was supposed to be implicated in crimes of the same kind. See the end of this chapter.

" that she did not expect to die; she said on mounting the " scaffold, " *C'est donc tout de bon ?*" " It is really in earnest " then ?" At length she is scattered to the winds, and her con- " fessor says she is a saint. Marshal Villeroy said the other " day, ' Penautier will be ruined by this affair;' Marshal de " Grammont answered, ' He must lay down his table ;' these " are epigrams. I suppose you know it is believed, that there " are an hundred thousand crowns distributed to make things " easy: innocence is not so prodigal."*

It is impossible to give a more lively picture of a court than this letter affords. The mistress and her suite, mentioned immediately after the princes; the game of cards, at which a crafty player makes sure of winning; the tender enquiries, without the smallest grain of sincerity; the state with which Madame de Montespan appears in all the pride and pomp of prostitution; the conversation respecting a woman condemned for poison, supposed to be connected with many persons of rank; the bribes said to be given for betraying the cause of justice; and, in fine, the veil of levity which is thrown over the whole, convey a living image of the court of Lewis the Fourteenth, which it would be in vain to hope to imitate by pages of description.

Madame de Maintenon.

The overthrow of Madame de Montespan, when at the summit of her glory, by a woman whom she had relieved from want, and loaded with favours, forms properly a part of the historical events of a former period. At present, I shall only describe the character displayed by Madame de Maintenon during her elevation, and the effects she produced on the manners of the court.

* Sévigné, 29th of July, 1676, l. 441.

After the death of the Queen, the King remained some time at Fontainebleau to comply with decorum, rather than to indulge grief. Madame de Maintenon affected at first to be in deep affliction at the death of her royal mistress, but the King, who was himself very little moved, laughed at her sorrow, and soon consoled her for the loss. Her neice, who relates the anecdote, says, she will not be sure that Madame de Maintenon did not answer the King as the Duke of Grammont did Madame Herault, when he condoled with her in a very melancholy tone on the death of her husband; "Alas!" she said, "the poor man did well to die." "Is that the way "you take it, Madame Herault?" answered the Duke, "then "to tell the truth, I dont care any more than you."*

The character and views of Madame de Maintenon underwent a great change at this period. For a long time she had suffered from the violence of Madame de Montespan, and in moments of disgust had often spoken of quitting the court. "Madame de Montespan and I," she writes to her confessor, "have had a very warm conversation. As I am the suffering "party, I have wept a great deal; she has given an account "of it to the King in her own manner. I own to you, I have "great difficulty in remaining in a place, where I am subject "every day to such scenes. I have often had a desire to be-"come a nun; the fear of repenting it has made me neglect "feelings, that many others would call vocations. For the last "seven months I have had the greatest wish to retire. Ma-"dame de Montespan represents me to the King as she "chooses, and makes me lose his esteem."† At another time she says, "I never wished more ardently to be away from

* Souvenirs de Caylus.

† Letters, t. i. p. 338.

" here." Yet she adroitly reserves herself excuses for staying near the King; she reminds her confessor, that he himself, had desired her to remain at court;* and explains away with great plausibility, her desire to become a nun.† But when once the victory over Madame de Montespan was gained, the pious widow finds no longer any difficulty in working out her salvation at court; and we hear no more of her persuasion that she cannot serve God in such a place of iniquity. Her whole mind is occupied in governing the King, in converting him to the service of heaven, and receiving from him in return the greatness of the world. Under a sober exterior and a veil of extreme piety, she conceals a fondness for power, and even for the pomps of life, not less lively than that of her predecessor. This mixture of devotion and worldliness, is well shewn in the following letter to Madame de St. Géran, her intimate friend: " The works of Maintenon are " much admired; the presence of the King does not spoil the " work: it is a fine sight to see a whole army employed " in the embellishment of a park. The two mountains will " be joined by forty-seven arcades solidly built: it is by the " confession of every one, a work worthy of the Romans and " of the King. All this leads me often to the reflection, " ' men are mad to give themselves so much pains to embel- " lish a dwelling, where they have only two days to remain.'"‡

* Letters, t. i. p. 338.

† " Je me suis mal expliquée si vous avez compris que je songeois à être reli- " gieuse. Je suis trop vieille pour changer de condition et selon le bien que j'aurai " je songerai à m'établir en pleine tranquillité. Dans le monde tous les retours " sont pour Dieu; dans le couvent tous les retours sont pour le monde." Lett. t. i. p. 340. How well expressed! and how ingenious an excuse for a worldly resolution!

‡ Letters, t. i. p. 403.

Such was the spirit which she introduced at court; a great love of the world at bottom, varnished over with a few moral or religious sentences, to have the appearance of despising that which occupied the attention and formed the business of life.*

Marriage of the King.

Madame de Maintenon, it is well known, so far subdued the heart of the King, as to induce him to marry her. The marriage, of which there is no doubt, seems to have taken place in 1685 or 6. Not more than four or five persons were present, of whom Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, was one. It is said that Lewis gave a solemn promise to Louvois and Harlay, that he never would declare his marriage; and, that when afterwards, Madame de Maintenon had succeeded by her intreaties in obtaining a counter promise of a declaration, Louvois fell on his knees, and presenting his sword to his sovereign, begged rather to die than see his master incur such disgrace. Lewis, it is said, was stopped by this remonstrance; and when, after the death of Louvois, he resumed his intention, was dissuaded by the advice of Fenelon and Bossuet. In this instance, I think we may say that Madame de Maintenon was more in the right, than the political and spiritual advisers of the monarch. It is impossible to see, in the marriage of Lewis, what St. Simon calls it, "the most profound, the most "publi", the most lasting, and the most unheard of humilia-"tion."† He had married the first time for the interest of the

* See a letter from a courtier to a lady, in the works of Lewis the Fourteenth, t. 6, p. 518, beginning with complaints of the "néant" of life and the misery of "what are called honours, dignities, and fortune," and proceeding to a very minute account of the person and manners of William the Third. In short, a letter of news written by a hermit.

† "L'humiliation la plus profonde, la plus publique, la plus durable, et la plus "inouie."

state, and that object provided for, he might surely be permitted to marry a second time for his own satisfaction, provided only, that the object of his choice was a woman of unblemished reputation. But by concealing his marriage, Lewis in some measure confirmed the opinion of his court. In the world, there are but two motives for keeping a marriage secret: fear of parents and relations, or of public disgrace. Lewis had nothing to apprehend from the first; it may therefore be inferred that he dreaded the second. But let it be observed, that this secrecy destroyed in great part the advantage of the marriage—the moral example. Lewis remained apparently living with a favourite mistress; for Madame de Maintenon, except on one trifling occasion, never assumed any privileges of rank which had not before been adopted by Madame de Montespan.* She did not leave her arm-chair when the royal family visited her; but neither did Madame de Montespan. She did not follow any of the princesses to the door; but no more did Madame de Montespan. In short, the married life of Lewis was as much a public scandal as his former connexions. He endeavoured to avoid the ridicule of the world, by the style and carriage of a man of gallantry; and to save himself at the day of judgment, by producing his certificate of marriage, and the relics he wore under his shirt.

Character of Madame de Maintenon.

The chief points in the character of Madame de Maintenon were devotion, vanity, and want of feeling. Her devotion, no doubt, was sincere; it took root in her mind, and seems to have been her only resource against that total disgust of life,

* Once, when going into a retired seat at the convent of the Carmelites, the Abbess said to her, that no one entered there but the Queen of France: "Ouvrez, "ma mère, ouvrez toujours," was the reply. Vanity in the house of penance!

to which a person of so much talent, and so little feeling, was liable. But she always retained much of the stain of earth. In a letter to her confessor, after giving an account of her prayers and her reading, she reproaches herself with "very "human motives, great vanity;"* and she seems in this instance to have known herself. When her niece came to court, she told her she had refused a place of honour near the person of the Dauphiness, and asked her if she would rather be the person who had obtained it, or her who had refused it. The court, says Madame de Caylus, saw more ostentation than humility in this refusal.† In the same spirit of vanity, when the King died, she could not help exclaiming as she wept, to a nun of St. Cyr, "It is a fine thing to weep for a king."‡

Her want of strong feeling, is abundantly shewn, by the chief events of her life. She did not hesitate, when in the prime of youth and beauty, to accept Scarron for a husband, in spite of his age and his disgusting figure. When established at court by the favour of Madame de Montespan, she found reasons satisfactory to her own mind, for expelling her benefactress and taking her place. When Fenelon, to whom she seems to have been greatly attached, was banished in consequence of his controversy with Bossuet, she never interfered in his favour. When the Cardinal de Noailles, whom she greatly esteemed, was ruined in character and fortune by the Jesuits, whom she disliked, she never said a word on his behalf. When Racine, encouraged by her, took a step which threw him into disgrace, Madame de Maintenon, the author

* Letter, t. i. 347.

† "Cela s'appelle jouir de son refus," is the lively observation of this not over-partial niece.

‡ "Il est beau de pleurer un roi."

of his misfortune, left him to his fate, and he died the victim of her timidity and prudence. Her policy was always directed to one object—to please the King, and maintain herself at court. To effect this purpose she disguised all her tastes, suppressed all her partialities; she even imposed upon herself the rule never to apply for any favour for her own relations, who owed their advance entirely to the wish of the ministers to pay their court to her. They were always indignant at the neglect of their relation: one of her neices, Madame de Villette, afterwards married to Lord Bolingbroke, who never could obtain her interference, said to her one day in a passion, "you wish to have a reputation for moderation, "and you make your family the victims of it." Her own brother, the Count d'Aubigné, received nothing but a blue riband, and sums of money from time to time out of the taxes; which gave occasion to his saying to the Marshal de Vivonne, the brother of Madame de Montespan, "I have taken out my Marshall's staff in money."*

It is a natural question to ask whether Madame de Maintenon was happy. We see so much misery occasioned by an indulgence of passion and feeling, that one is curious to know whether a person who conquered all feelings, who overcame all ties of blood, who resisted the temptations of love, smothered the partialities of friendship, and who rose thereby to a height of fortune that seems almost miraculous, was rewarded by the attainment of happiness. We have it under her own hand that she was not. Some part of her unhappi-

* "J'ai eu mon bâton en argent." It was the same brother who, hearing Madame de Maintenon one day express a disgust at life, said to her, "vous avez donc parole d'épouser Dieu le père."

ness, it will be thought, may easily be accounted for. During the early part of her life she had to struggle with rigour; afterwards with poverty; afterwards with the imperious humour of Madame de Montespan. These portions of her career, it will readily be imagined, were not altogether bright; but was she not happy, it will be said, when the first King of Europe was at her feet, and the court of France paid her homage as their Queen? Alas, no! Of her whole life this part seems to have been the least happy. It is at this time of her life, that her letters are the most full of complaints of the emptiness of grandeur, and the slavery of rank. "What a tor-" ment," she said, "to have to amuse a King who is no longer " amuseable." "I find in looking back upon my life," she writes to her neice, "that from the age of thirty-two, which was the " beginning of my fortune, I have not been a moment with-" out troubles, and that they have always been encreasing."* She was one day looking at some carp that had been put into a marble basin in the gardens of Versailles: "These carp are like me," she said, "they regret their mud."

Influence of the mistresses.

Voltaire has said, that the mistresses of Lewis the Fourteenth had scarcely any influence over the public acts of the reign. With respect to Madame de Montespan, we have the evidence of Madame de Maintenon: "that she knew all the " secrets of the state, and gave very good, or very bad advice, " according to her passions."‡ With respect to Madame de Maintenon herself, we have every reason to suppose that she exercised a very great influence in all the patronage of the

* Lettres de Maintenon, t. iii. p. 170. † Vie de Maintenon.

‡ "Elle savoit tous les secrets de l'état, et donnoit de très bons conseils et de " très mauvais, selon ses passions." Lettres de Maintenon, iii. p. 283.

state, even in the command of armies. Catinat, it is well known, was deprived of a command in which he distinguished himself, because she thought him remiss in religious duties. The celebrated Massillon says in his memoirs; "Madame de Maintenon was the only person who had a powerful influence with "the King. She had great talents, but at the same time all "the faults of a woman jealous of her power. She had a "minute knowledge of all business. She had an influence "even in the choice of ministers."*

The manner in which Lewis transacted business, is a proof of her influence. The minister came to her room, where he made his report to Lewis, while Madame de Maintenon sate in another part working or reading. Now and then the King turned round to her, and asked her her opinion. It is even said, that the whole portfolio of the minister was arranged before hand with the clandestine Queen. Sometimes indeed the King took a pleasure in contradicting her wishes, and refusing to name the person she desired to promote. But he did the same thing with his ministers. Old Le Tellier said, that after agreeing to nineteen appointments, he would often refuse the twentieth, to shew he was not led. This was called by the old minister, taking his *bisque*. To return to the influence of Madame de Maintenon; what seems to put the question beyond all doubt, is the account given by herself. Speaking of these councils, she says, "when I was "not wanted, which happened very seldom."† Now it is

* "Madame de Maintenon étoit la seule personne qui eût un credit puissant "auprès du Roi. Elle avoit beaucoup d'esprit, mais en même temps tous les "défauts d'une femme jalouse de son influence. Elle avoit une connoissance dé-"taillée de toutes les affaires. Elle influoit même sur le choix des ministres." Mém. de Massillon.

† Entretiens. Lettres de Maintenon, t. iii.

clear, she could be wanted for no other purpose than to give her advice. It is said that when her opinion was required, the King, turning round to her, used to ask, " *Qu'en pense* " *votre solidité ?*" " What does your solidity say ?"

The deference of this great King, to a lady older than himself, who held no ostensible situation, exposed him to the laughter of the world; and William the Third, at the time when Barbesieux, the dissipated son of Louvois, was secretary of state, said with some humour, that most kings chose old ministers and young mistresses, but that Lewis had chosen a young minister and an old mistress.*

It was not from his enemies alone, however, that sarcasms and jests proceeded. The Duchess of Burgundy, the favourite both of the monarch and the mistress, said to them one day, hearing them praise the government of Queen Anne, " *Ma tante* (addressing Madame de Maintenon by the title " she always gave her), one must allow that queens govern " better than kings; and do you know why, *ma tante ?* It is " because under kings women govern, and under queens " men govern."† It is to the credit of Lewis and Madame de Maintenon, that neither of them was offended by this sally.

The character of Madame de Maintenon was attacked by nearly all parties; by the friends of the Dauphin, and of the Duke of Orleans; by the Jansenists, the Protestants, and finally

* Burnet. Hist. of his Own Times. Montesquieu has the same observation in his Lettres Persanes. Duclos tells the story differently. Madame Cornuel made the same observation with her usual felicity of expression. Having gone to Versailles soon after the appointment of Seignelai and Torcy, she was asked on her return what she had seen at court: " J'ai vu à la cour," she replied, " ce que je " n'eusse jamais cru y voir, c'est l'amour au tombeau et le ministère au berceau." Mém. de Madame, p. 294.

† St. Simon.

by the whole nation, at the time when the arms of France were unsuccessful, and loyalty sought for a scape goat near the King, that might bear his sins away from his sacred person. It may be said in her favour, that as the wife and widow of Scarron, she seems to have obtained general esteem; that her reputation was very little attacked, even by scandal and calumny, in an age when beauty, youth, poverty, and chastity, were seldom found in the same woman; that she remembered, with the exception of those of Madame de Montespan, the benefits she had received in the days of her distress; that she was incapable of rancour; and that she endeavoured, in a difficult situation, to perform what she thought her duty. On the other hand it must be said, that she had no passion for good, any more than for evil: that she supplanted her benefactress; that she had no moral courage; that she lost many opportunities of doing essential benefit; and converted a great King, soiled with human vices, into a bigotted monk without any virtues.

The three chief mistresses of Lewis were suited to the time of life at which they were chosen. Madame de la Valliere had beauty and tenderness to captivate his youth; Madame de Montespan had beauty and wit to attract his middle age; Madame de Maintenon had the remains of beauty, with great talent, great insinuation, great devotion, great powers of pleasing, to charm and occupy the mind in his declining age. She formed a repose, to which he gladly retired from the fatigues of stormy passion, and the caprices of imperious ambition.

Manners.

The manners of the court varied, as I have said, with the ascendency of these different mistresses. The licentiousness that prevailed at the beginning of the reign, will be better

described by two or three anecdotes, than by any quantity of declamation or of reasoning.

Anecdotes. A child of Mademoiselle de Fouilloux, maid of honour to the Duchess of Orleans, was brought up publicly by Madame d'Armagnac with her own children.* The Chevalier de Lorraine, who was the father of this child, went one day to the mother, and said, "Mademoiselle, what is the matter with "you? Why are you melancholy? What is there extraordi- "nary in all that has happened to us? We loved one ano- "ther; we do so no longer; constancy is not a virtue of our "age: it is much better that we should forget the past, and "resume our ordinary manner. What a pretty little dog you "have got; who gave it you?"†

From the same excellent authority we have another story illustrative of manners. Madame de R. and Madame de B. quarrelled at play about a sum of twelve pistoles; Madame de B. at length tired of disputing, gave them up. "Ah, "Madame," said the other, "that is well for you, who have "lovers that give you money." "Madame," said Madame de B. "I am not obliged to explain to you how that matter is, "but I well know that when I entered the world ten years "ago, you already gave money to yours."‡

Another anecdote will speak for the morals of the men. A gentleman well known at court, of the name of Villarceaux, when speaking to the King of another subject, took occasion to say, that there were persons who told his neice (Madame de Grancéi), that his Majesty had designs upon her; that if

* Sévigné, 30th March, 1672.

† Sévigné, 1st April, 1672. Madame de Sévigné only adds, "et voilá le de- "nouement de cette belle passion."

‡ Ibid. 2nd Nov. 1673.

it were so, he begged him to make use of him; that the affair would be safe in his hands, and he would answer for success. The King laughed, and turned it off with a joke.* In these days any conduct was tolerated in society. Every one knows that the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos, who was never married, lived for several years with Villarceaux at his house; that she had many children by different lovers, and that the paternity of one of these being disputed between two gentlemen, was decided by throwing lots. There is nothing singular in this career; what is extraordinary is, that Ninon de l'Enclos was the bosom friend of Madame de Maintenon, and the admiration of all Paris.

Devotion.

The lives of the French ladies of this time were divided between two passions, love and devotion. Those who were abandoned by their lovers, or by youth, found a resource in pretending to an exaggerated devotion. This devotion, be it observed, did not consist in paying attention to the exercises of religion, and fulfilling at the same time the duties it enjoins, but was made up of passionate repentance, floods of tears, ostentatious retirement, singular dress, and loud professions of superior sanctity. The persons who took this turn, were always careful to let their religious superiority be known. One day a servant offering a glass of *liqueur* to a lady of this class, she turned to her neighbour and said, "what does he "offer it me for? does not he know I am *dévote?*" The princess of Harcourt proclaimed her conversion by leaving off *rouge* at court. Becoming afterwards *dame du palais*, she began to repent of her hard penance, and said she would put on her *rouge* again if the King, or her husband, comman-

* Sévigné, December 23rd, 1671.

ded it. " Bets are offered," says Madame de Sévigné, " that " the Princess d'Harcourt will not be *dévote* in a year's time, " now that she is *dame du palais,* and that she will put on her " *rouge* again; for this *rouge* is the law and the prophets; " upon this *rouge* all christianity turns."*

Such was the devotion of ostentation. Another kind was that of tenderness. Madame de la Valliere was one of those who found the benefit of this species of religion; for there can be little doubt that the last hold she possessed of the heart of the King, was the interest she excited by her retirement. When she first went to a convent, she sent the King a message, " that she would sooner have quitted the court, " *after having lost the honour of his good graces,* if she could " have obtained of herself not to see him any more; that this " weakness had so prevailed in her, that she was hardly able " to sacrifice it to God; that nevertheless, she wished the re- " mainder of the passion she had entertained for him, to serve " her as penance, and that after having given all her youth to " him, she thought the rest of her life was not too much to " devote to the care of her salvation."† The King wept, the fair penitent returned, and in a few days after was better established at court than she had been for a long time.‡ Madame de Montespan, however, obtained the pre-eminence, and the deserted mistress was obliged again to have recourse to devotion, to fill the vacancy of a heart that was too tender to allow her to be happy without passion. This species of devotion, was perhaps the most common of all.

Another kind remains to be mentioned, namely, the devotion

* Sévigné, 5th Jan. 1674.

† Ibid. 12th Feb. 1671.

‡ Ibid. Feb. 27, 1671.

of ambition. Such was that of Madame de Longueville; who, after playing a conspicuous part in the war of the Fronde, was obliged when peace was made, and her lovers had abandoned her, to seek for some other sort of occupation. At one time she attempted the part of a *bel-esprit*, and was at the head of one of two parties, that were divided on the merits of a couple of sonnets. Finding this would not suffice, she fell into extreme devotion, and became a very considerable person in the Jansenist party. It was chiefly by her means that the papal ordinance, known by the name of the peace of Clement the Ninth, was obtained; and during the latter part of her life, the celebrated Arnauld owed his safety to her powerful protection.*

In this manner passed the early years of the reign of Lewis. Nearly every woman who was young and handsome, occupied the years of her youth and beauty in intrigue. La Rochefoucauld has observed maliciously, that though he had known some few who past through life without reproach, he had never seen any who, having once yielded to temptation, had confined themselves to a single lover. The declining age of these ladies was spent in the transports of repentance; and when admirers no longer crowded the door with the tribute of their homage and protestations, the confessor was admitted with his prayers and his penance. When the King became himself devout, however, and Madame de Maintenon governed

* This celebrated woman had been in early life any thing but over scrupulous, as the histories of the time relate. Being once in Normandy with her husband, those about her saw that she was overcome with ennui: they proposed to her a a hunting party, "No, I do not like hunting." Work? "No I do not like work." Walking, or play? "No, I do not like either." Then what would you have? "What can I say? I do not like innocent pleasures." Mem. de Madame, p. 104.

the court with the spirit of a convent, it became the fashion of the frivolous, and the flattery of the interested, to assume an exterior of piety, even in their younger days, and to treat the world, which in fact they adored, with an affected contempt. The places of worship were crowded with courtiers and women of fashion. "Ladies who appeared the furthest
Hypocrisy. "from it," said Madame de Maintenon, with triumphant joy, "never leave the church." An air of sobriety and puritanical decorum, pervaded the scenes where Madame de Montespan had established the empire of gaiety and dissipation. Yet this appearance was hollow and deceitful, as a single instance will prove. The King's chapel was usually crowded long before he appeared. One day Brissac, Major of the guard, entered the chapel a short time before the arrival of Lewis, and marched out his men, saying loud enough to be heard, "The King does not come to day;" instantly the whole chapel was deserted. In a few minutes the officer of the guard marched back his men. When the King entered, he was much surprized at the thinness of the audience, and the officer was obliged to tell him what he had done. The name of the Marquise de Dangeau deserves to be recorded as one of three or four who remained when the King was not expected.

The hypocrisy of the court even extended to the choice of a confessor. Most of the persons about the person of Lewis, chose a Jesuit for their confessor, in order to conform to the predilection of the monarch. But when they were at the point of death, these same persons, no longer able to dissemble their dislike to the Jesuits, sent for a father of the oratory, or some other order, or from the secular clergy, to give them their last communion. The Duchess of Burgundy, Henri Jules de Bourbon Condé, the Princess Louisa Maria Stuart,

daughter of James the Second, and the Queen of Spain, first wife of Philip the Fifth, were among the most illustrious of these dissemblers. It was for this reason that Harlai, the Chancellor, having some Jesuits and some fathers of the oratory in his room at the same time, said to the first, " fathers, " one must live with you ;" then turning to the others, " and " die with you, fathers."

A crime of a very deep dye prevailed at Paris during this reign, and proved that the ferocity nourished by the civil wars of past ages, was not yet entirely subsided. The Marquis of Brinvilliers lodged in his house a young officer of the name of Sainte Croix. His wife, struck by the handsome figure of this young man, advised her husband not to let him remain in the house; he neglected her warning, and the loss of her virtue was the consequence. Her father, D'Aubrai, civil lieutenant of Paris, discovering the intrigue, procured a *lettre de cachet*, and caused the young officer to be confined in the Bastile. Here he became acquainted with Exili, an Italian, who, after spending all he had in a search after the philosopher's stone, had adopted the horrible trade of selling poison; had been discovered, and imprisoned. Instructed by this man, Sainte Croix communicated his knowledge to the Marchioness of Brinvilliers, who with infernal malignity made use of it to destroy by poison her father, her two brothers, and her sister. Yet this woman pretended to religion; went through the forms of piety, and often practised confession. When she was taken, a general confession, written in her own hand, was found upon her. She was burnt in 1676. Poisoning.

In the mean time this horrible crime spread more and more in Paris. Exili had been imprisoned upon the infor-

mation derived from persons who had revealed their dealings with him in confession, and it was not possible to produce their evidence upon a trial. For such is the singular nature of confession, that the government is allowed to know of the crime, but not to convict the criminal. Exili, from his prison, continued to make proselytes to his system of poisoning, and the King was obliged to create a tribunal of enquiry, called the *chambre ardente*. But the crime had infested Paris from the year 1670, and this court was not instituted till the year 1680. The Duchess of Bouillon and the Countess of Soissons, both nieces of Cardinal Mazarin, were cited to appear before it: the Duchess of Bouillon had been guilty only of consulting some pretended astrologers and fortune-tellers upon her destiny; or, at most, had been indulged with a sight of the devil; one of the common tricks of these impostors. One of the presidents of the chamber, named La Reynie, asked her with much gravity if she had seen the devil; she answered that she saw him at that moment; that he was very ugly and ill-looking, and that he was disguised as a counsellor of state. The imprudent president was confounded, and drew in his horns. The Countess of Soissons was not so triumphant as her sister. Being accused of having bought some of the poison, called by the dealers *succession powder*, she preferred retiring to Brussels, to the risk or embarrassment of a trial. The imputation pursued her, however, during the rest of her life. The Queen of Spain, who died in 1689, was said to be poisoned by hermeans.

Among the persons accused, the most illustrious and least suspected, was Francis de Montmorenci Bouteville, Duke of Luxembourg, a marshal in the French armies, and one

of the most distinguished of the peers of France. The miserable gang who dealt in poison and prophecy, alledged that he had sold himself to the devil, and that a young girl of the name of Dupin had been poisoned by his means. Among other stories, they said he had made a contract with the devil, in order to marry his son to the daughter of the Marquis of Louvois. To this atrocious and absurd accusation, the Marshal, who had surrendered himself at the Bastile on the first reports against him, replied with the mingled sentiment of pride and innocence, " When Matthieu de Montmo- " renci married the widow of Louis le Gros, he did not have " recourse to the devil, but to the States-General, who de- " clared that this marriage was necessary, in order to obtain for " the minor king, the support of the house of Montmorenci." This brave man was imprisoned in a cell six feet and a half long; and his trial, which was interrupted for several weeks, lasted altogether fourteen months. No judgment was pronounced; and the Marshal, after a few days retirement, resumed his functions at court, where Lewis received him without speaking of what had happened. Such were the manners, and such the justice of the old monarchy of France!*

* In this Chapter I have not hesitated to expose the vices of the French court, as I conceive that, however disgusting, nothing is more useful than such an exposure, both in a political and moral view of the history of mankind. But I have entirely omitted the details of many habits of Lewis the Fourteenth and his family, which can serve no useful purpose, and are too indelicate for the perusal of the humblest class of English readers.

CHAPTER III.

Administration of Lewis. The Army. The Navy. Roads. Buildings. The Canal of Languedoc. Colbert. The Finances. Legislation. Administration of Justice. The Bastile. State of the People. General Review of the Government of Lewis.

It is now time to leave the court and the nobility, and to examine what use Lewis made of the absolute power which he possessed in governing the kingdom at large. Let us take a short review, first, of his administration of the executive authority; secondly, of his exercise of the power of imposing taxes and making laws; and, thirdly, of his judicial acts.

The Army. With respect to the military force, all his regulations were framed with a view to concentrate power in the hands of his minister of war. For this purpose he abolished the office of Constable, and after the death of the Duke d'Epernon, that of Colonel General of the Infantry. Before his time, generals at the head of armies used to give promotion to officers who distinguished themselves on the field of battle; to bestow the command of the smaller divisions of the army on whom they pleased; and to entrust detachments sent on any particular enterprize, to such of their generals or colonels as they thought most likely to succeed. But by the military ordinances of Lewis, all promotion was reserved to the King himself; the army was divided into brigades, commanded by officers appointed under the name of brigadiers; and all detachments were ordered to be given to the officers, according to a fixed rule of seniority. These regulations were greatly

censured by some, as tying up the hands of a Commander-in-chief, and fettering the discretion proper to be exercised by a general in the field.* On the other hand, what was lost on particular occasions, was gained in general habits of order and discipline; and by bringing all parts of the system under one head was acquired the advantage of unity, which is of more importance in the government of an army, than in the conduct of any other institution. Other regulations of Lewis were of less doubtful utility. He gave a uniform to his troops, dress having hitherto been a matter left to the choice of individuals. He introduced bayonets into general use; he separated the grenadiers, and formed them into a company for each regiment; he founded schools of artillery, and brought that arm to a perfection before unknown; he introduced regular discipline and exercise in all parts of his army, both in peace and war. Let us add to this, that he was the patron of Vauban, who gave a new face to the art of fortification; and who, under his directions, created that triple barrier, which so long employed Marlborough, and remained during all the last century the protection of France.

I will not quote it to his praise, that he formed thirty regiments of militia. They were chosen by ballot, and he did not permit those who were drawn to find a substitute for money; a cruel oppression upon the people of the country, on whom the burthen chiefly fell.

The regular army was prodigiously increased in numbers by Lewis. In 1672, he had already one hundred and eighty thousand regular troops, and during his last wars he had four hundred and fifty thousand men under arms, including

* Vide St. Simon.

the troops of the marine.* But while Lewis greatly improved, as well as augmented his military force by diligence and industry, it must be owned upon the other hand, that he interfered too much with their action in the field. Louvois, who had the merit of the exact discipline, the complete appointments, and the regular provisioning of the army, had, like his master, the defect of wishing to govern them during their campaigns. While Turenne lived, his established reputation greatly checked this propensity, but when he was no more, Louvois took upon him the authority of general-in-chief, as well as that of minister of war. Lewis himself was delighted with this species of power; and after the death of Louvois, he continued to the day of his death writing his own dispatches to his generals in the field. In one of these, he seems to think it a compliment to Marshal Luxembourg, to tell him, that he found they generally agreed in opinion.† Without being endowed either with the capacity or the inclination to go though the fatigues of a campaign, he appears to have imagined that he could dictate from Versailles all the movements and operations of his armies. It was unfortunate for the success of his arms, that a courier could, in a few days, go from his cabinet to the most distant of the head quarters of his generals; and had the sea intervened between him and his marshals, it would clearly have been much to the advantage of his glory. The only way in which his commanders could prevent the mischief thus caused, was by persuading him that their plans were of his own suggestion, and thus obviating his interference; but in many cases, his previous decisions had a fatal effect. A remarkable instance of this occurred at Turin,

* Siècle de Louis XIV. † Œuvres de Louis XIV.

where the French army were obliged to wait in a disadvantageous position, in which they were defeated, because Lewis and Chamillard had decided before the campaign opened, that the general in Piedmont should not be the first to attack.

When we consider the discipline, spirit, and numbers of the French army, during this reign, it seems astonishing they should not have accomplished more than they did; especially if we reflect that England was for a long time the accomplice of Lewis; Spain, broken and enfeebled; Holland relaxed in her military discipline; and the Emperor distracted by the wars with Turkey and his Hungarian subjects. Seeing these circumstances, I am much inclined to think that it was the imperfect meddling generalship of Lewis, which prevented him in the days of his glory from conquering Europe. In like manner during his decline, the same interference afforded some compensation to Marlborough, for the obstacles thrown in his way by the Dutch deputies.

The Navy.

The object next in importance to the army, in the eyes of Lewis, was his navy; and as the military force was entrusted to the talents of Louvois, the marine was confided to the industry and abilities of Colbert. The success of Colbert's efforts was, during his life, equal to that of his colleague and rival. In the year 1660, a very few ships, which, neglected by Mazarin, lay rotting in the ports, formed the entire navy of France. When Lewis joined his forces to those of Holland in his first war, the whole naval strength that could be dispatched to combine with the Dutch squadron, consisted of a single fire ship, the only fleet that he possessed being absent on a distant expedition. In the year 1666, to the surprise of both friends and enemies, thirty-six ships of war and fifteen fire-ships appeared in the Mediterranean; four-

teen ships of war and five fire-ships in the Atlantic. In 1672, he possessed sixty ships of the line and forty frigates. In 1681, his navy consisted of one hundred and ninety-eight ships of war, including tenders; and thirty gallies were armed, or ready to be fitted out at Toulon. The number of men enrolled for different classes of naval service, consisted of one hundred and sixty-six thousand; eleven thousand regular troops were employed on board the ships; a thousand of the nobles or gentry served, or were learning to serve in the sea service. In 1681, d'Estrées was made a marshal, being the first naval officer who ever held that rank in France.

Such was the state of the navy when Colbert died; and the conduct of the officers and seamen in the actions in which they were engaged, did not disappoint the anxiety of the minister and the hopes of the monarch. But the fatal battle of La Hogue, in 1692, damped the spirits still more than it diminished the force of the marine; and nearly a century elapsed before the navy of France became again formidable to England.

The attention of Colbert was likewise turned to the state of the ports. He made arsenals at Brest, Toulon, Dunkirk, and Havre de Grace. As France was in want of ports on the coast of the Channel, and of the Ocean, he built a port, town, and arsenal at Rochefort.

Interior improvements.

In his improvements of the interior of his kingdom, Lewis, and his minister Colbert, shewed a great portion of their usual activity. New roads were made, and the plans laid down for those large, but somewhat ostentatious, causeways that intersect France. Among the useful works of Lewis, must likewise be reckoned, the improvement of the police of Paris; a town utterly void, when he came to the throne, of

all the comforts now thought essential to a great capital. He provided for the cleaning of the streets, caused them to be lighted by five thousand lanthorns, and established a guard or watch for the safety of the inhabitants. In 1667, a magistrate was appointed by himself, charged with this function. Yet it must not escape an unprejudiced observer, that in taking the direction of the police, Lewis added one more to the arbitrary powers which he exercised: neither can it now be admitted that the paving of the streets, which he caused to be made, is so good, that "there is no town paved like "Paris."* The pavement, even and well-made as it is for carriages, has no flag stones for the convenience of those on foot, who, to this day, still continue to fatigue their feet, and expose their lives, the victims of a paving aristocracy.

Buildings.

It may be supposed, that if Lewis improved his country in a useful manner, he did much more to foster those arts that are merely ornamental. Every thing great of this kind is to be attributed to Colbert, who suggested some plans that were executed, and others that were neglected. In 1664, Colbert was appointed director of the public buildings, an office which properly implies the direction of the fine arts. Bernini was sent for from Rome, and received magnificent rewards for some plans for completing the Louvre, that were never executed. During his stay, however, was executed that magnificent front of which the design was given by Perrault, and which to this day makes the Louvre an object of general admiration. The Arch of St. Denis, and the Hospital of the Invalids, are the chief of the other monuments of architecture, by which Paris can recal the memory of Lewis the Fourteenth.

* Voltaire. It may have been quite true in his time.

The Canal of Languedoc.

To Colbert, France is indebted for one of her noblest public works, the canal which joins the Mediterranean and the Ocean. He adopted and executed a project, first broached during the reign of Francis the First, and renewed under that of Henry the Fourth. Much discussion has taken place on the question to whom is due the credit of the execution; but be that as it may, it is impossible to deprive Colbert of the glory of having undertaken the work, and appropriated funds for its completion. The canal, known by the name of the Canal of Languedoc, is forty-six leagues in length, thirty feet in breadth, and has a hundred and four sluices. The waters are collected in a bason on the summit of one of the lowest of a chain of mountains, and flow from thence on each side to the sea. In eleven days merchandize could be conveyed from one sea to the other.

By the judicious advice of Colbert, Lewis diminished the number of convents, and suppressed seventeen holidays. This last measure was of itself a prodigious benefit to the industry of France.

Colbert, with some partiality for the marine, which was his own department, valued the importance of the different branches of the public service, in the following order: navy, foreign affairs, army, civil list. It is much to his credit that he puts the expences of the King in the last place; it is likewise to his honour, that he opposed the extravagant follies of Lewis. He had the boldness to tell him, that kings who do not acquire fame in war, are measured by their buildings; that he hoped Lewis would not be measured by Versailles; and that it would have been much more to his glory to have finished the Louvre.

A separate chapter would be required to treat of the value of the encouragement given by Lewis, under the direction of Colbert, to sciences, letters, and the fine arts. Let it here only be recalled to mind, that he established an academy of sciences; that he distributed more than one hundred thousand francs yearly, by order of his master, to men of letters, both in France and in foreign countries, and that he established an academy at Rome, where the art of painting was better learned than it could possibly be in France.

Finances.

The next great question which we have to explain, is how money was procured for the vast and ostentatious machinery of the government; to supply the demands of war abroad and corruption at home; the equipment and maintenance of an immense army; the formation and furnishing so many fortresses; in short, all the expenditure necessary for the maintenance of great power, together with all that which is caused by the frivolity of a luxurious and profuse court. The examination of this question brings us immediately to the plans of Colbert, who for twenty years ruled over the finances, and made his name equal in fame to that of his master. To have some idea of the task undertaken by Colbert it is necessary to state shortly, the previous situation of the finances and commerce of the kingdom.

State of the Finances before Colbert.

In 1660, the people paid about ninety million of livres (at twenty-seven livres the marc, or about seven millions five hundred thousand pounds sterling) in taxes. Of this sum, not more than thirty-five millions were applicable to the service of the state, fifty-five millions being swallowed up by debts and perpetual charges. Since 1621, there had been created twenty-five millions of annual interest of stock, besides an

enormous mass of paper, issued for the compensation of offices and alienations abolished. These operations had been so ill conducted, that speculators bought stock at a low price, and obtained from the government nearly the value at which it had at first been created. Others parted with their stock to the treasury at the market price, but obtained new loans on the terms of paying only two thirds of the sum stipulated, and receiving fifteen per cent. interest.* Then followed new loans to discharge the former, at twenty and twenty-five per cent. interest. Every branch of the revenue was mortgaged in perpetuity. It was in vain that the duties of excise and commerce had been augmented sixty per cent. since 1633; the revenue under these heads had dimininished. In the same way, and for the same reason, the *tailles*, which had been raised to fifty-seven millions, did not bring so much money to the treasury as before 1620, when they were only eighteen or twenty millions.† This was partly owing to the inability of the people to pay, and partly to the extortion of the receivers, in whose favour a new tax had been laid on, by way of perquisite to them, which was always collected before any other.‡ Levies by distress, surcharges, imprisonments, poverty, abandonment of culture, were the consequences of these dreadful burthens.

Offices. Another great fault in the administration, was the number of offices in the departments of finance and justice. By an

* It is inconceivable that the government should not have thought of going into the market itself to buy stock at the current price. But when the master does not look on the steward makes his harvest.

† Forbonnais. Recherches et considérations sur les finances de France, t. ii. p. 127.

‡ Ibid.

official account given to Colbert in 1664, it appeared that the number of places in these two departments was upwards of forty-five thousand, of which the salaries amounted to more than eight millions of livres. These offices were all sold, and the money produced by the sale was part of the revenue. Each of these offices carried with it an exemption from taxes; each new creation, therefore, diminished the permanent resources of the state. The current price of the whole of these offices, at that time, amounted altogether to four hundred and nineteen millions, or about thirty-four millions sterling.*

Internal Commerce.

The internal commerce of the country was not only embarrassed, but nearly destroyed by the duties, which were levied in fifty different shapes on the transit of commodities from one province to another. The provinces in which states were held had a right to impose their own taxes, and were therefore free from those which were levied upon the kingdom in general.† Hence not only were they considered as foreign countries in respect to the kingdom in general, but so many and so various were the duties in different parts of France, that trade could with difficulty escape from the intricacy of the folds in which it was entangled. Thus in Provence there were fourteen kinds of duty peculiar to that part of the kingdom, besides other general taxes. In going down the Loire, merchandize paid duty no less than twenty-eight times between St. Rambord and Nantes, besides some other payments; and merchants, at length, preferred land carriage, as much cheaper than the use of one of the finest rivers in Europe.‡

* Forb. t. ii. † See the list of the provinces esteemed foreign. Ibid. t. ii. p. 304.

‡ These imposts still subsisted in 1750.

In a memoir addressed to Cardinal Mazarin, it is asserted that before 1660,* a ball of silk from the Levant paid only sixteen livres; that from that time it paid more than a hundred and twelve livres, before it could be employed in manufactures. The author avers, that the customs of Valence were paid three times; once by a ball of silk coming from Italy to Lyons; again in going from Lyons to Mantua to be wrought; and again in coming from Mantua to Lyons, to be manufactured. Besides this, there were other duties at Lyons itself. It is likewise stated that the importations of silk had diminished from twenty thousand to three thousand balls a year. These balls were of one hundred and sixty pounds weight each. Such were the impediments to internal trade and manufactures.

Manufactures.

On the subject of the manufactures and foreign commerce of France at this time, there is preserved a very important remonstrance, made to the King by the six "*corps de marchands de la ville de Paris,*" with relation to the new taxes, imposed by the declaration of 1654. They represent, that by the declaration of 1654, a new duty was imposed on the entry of all foreign manufactures, as well as a duty of twenty-four livres on the marc of gold, and four livres on the marc of silver. They affirm, that these new taxes, "instead of advantage will produce a loss, experience having "shewn, that excessive imposts have never augmented the "revenue of your Majesty; but make a loss on the gross of "what is gained in the detail, because trade in general "diminishes, when the sums levied on each particular article

* Forbonnais says, the memoir was presented in 1659. One or other of these dates must be wrong, and evidently the one in the text. The year intended, is perhaps 1650. t. ii. p. 143.

" are augmented, and the increase of commerce is more bene-
" ficial than any augmentation of duties, not only to indivi-
" duals, but to the public; because by means of commerce,
" the riches of individuals increasing, flow through many
" channels into the Kings coffers." In support of this reasoning, the authors affirm that the farmers of the great duties have always a clause to enable them to dissolve their contract if new taxes shall be imposed; and that in the instance of gold, although the regular duty was twenty-eight sous a marc, the farmers only levied twenty-one, in order to bring into the country a greater quantity.* The gold thus brought into France, being worked into gold thread for lace and ribands, was sent to Spain and the Indies; the profit of the manufacture to the country being such that the raw gold was worth eight crowns, and the worked twenty. They proceed to complain, that the duties on the most necessary articles, *viz.* the raw material, were the most raised; so that some goods paid twenty-five, some fifty, and some more than an hundred per cent. The prohibitions of English goods, by a declaration of 1648, had entirely ruined the commerce with England in wine, which had been in its turn prohibited in England. Among the goods which the French exported, we find enumerated in this document, the linens, serges, and bombazeens of Lyons; fustians, stockings of silk, worsted, cotton, thread and goats hair, all kinds of caps and millinery sent to Spain, Italy, and South America; all kinds of furs and hardware; knives and scissors; ribands, silk lace, gold and silver lace, pins, needles, gloves, silk, and gold and silver tissues, hats of Paris and

* The farmers of the five great duties, were the farmers of the customs, which chiefly consisted in the duties so called.

Rouen, which were used by almost all the people of Europe, and even of the new world. This memorial, which is full of the soundest principles of commerce, and of the most curious details, establishes two very important facts; the one, that individuals guided only by a sagacious view of their own interest, were well aware that low duties were often more productive to the revenue than high; the other, that France had a considerable trade before this time, which the government was proceeding very fast to destroy by means of injudicious taxation.*

Council of Finance.

One of the first measures of Colbert, was to establish a council of finance; instituted chiefly for the purpose of reducing to some certain rule, the operations of the collectors of taxes; who in each separate province, and almost in each separate village, had a different plan of enriching themselves and ruining the country.

Taille.

The *taille* was justly considered by Colbert the great scourge of the kingdom. This tax was of two kinds, the *taille personelle*, and the *taille réelle*. The *taille réelle* was a fixed tax according to a known estimate, upon houses, lands, and property of all kinds. The *taille personelle* was an arbitrary tax; a certain sum was ordered to be raised from each province and district; the collector of the district afterwards apportioned this sum according to the supposed means of each individual. Of course there was no end to the vexations, corruptions, abuses, ruin, and misery, occasioned by this latter tax. The object of Colbert was to diminish the impost in the whole amount; to remedy the abuses; and to convert the personal *taille* into the real. When he assumed the direction of

* For the whole of this document see Forbonnais, t. i. p. 128.

the finances, the sums thus levied were upwards of fifty millions; he began by remitting three millionsthat were due; he then, in the course of successive years, reduced the whole amount to thirty-five millions, and had he lived, he meant to have reduced it to twenty-five. He ordered that the collectors should not seize the cattle or the tools, by which husbandmen and artificers gained their bread, to satisfy the demands of the tax. In order to convert the personal into the real *taille*, he took the generality of Montauban for an experiment, and endeavoured to assimilate the tax in that department, to that of the province of Languedoc, which was a *pays d'états*, where the *taille* was real. But it so happened, that the base on which the tax had been grounded in Languedoc, was very unequal; an inequality, however, which was little felt, owing to the smallness and insignificance of the whole sum raised. In order to adapt the tax to the generality of Montauban, Colbert injudiciously took the unequal scale of Languedoc, and the high amount of Montauban. The consequence was, that industry suffered greatly; in some places the amount of the tax exceeded the whole value of the produce of the land, and cultivation was abandoned. As a remedy for this evil, Colbert, in the most arbitrary manner, forbade proprietors to leave any part of their land uncultivated, unless they likewise left fallow all the rest of their estates. This violence, of course, failed, and at last, the minister was obliged to give large rewards to those who would again cultivate their lands. So unequal was the tax, that in 1727, when the *tailles* were raised in amount, one hundred and twenty thousand livres were given as a compensation to the lands too heavily taxed in the generality of Montauban.

Thus unfortunate was the attempt of Colbert to reform the *tailles.* He left them, certainly, much lower in amount than he found them, and during his administration abuses were restrained; but he likewise left an extravagant king upon the throne, with whom there existed strong temptations to extortion, and no other check upon oppression than the personal vigilance and humanity of the minister of finance.

It was the intention indeed, of Colbert, to have made a regular estimate of the value of property in France as the base of this tax; and he had a conference with the provincial intendants upon the subject shortly before he died. But any regulation on this subject must have been imperfect, so long as there were numerous exemptions, and the powerful sheltered themselves by privilege, from the burthen which broke the back of the poor. For instance, in Dauphiny, where there were five thousand hearths, fifteen hundred were exempt from direct taxes, and those of course belonging to the persons best able to contribute.

The Gabelle.

The next subject for review is the *gabelle.* The *gabelle,* or salt tax, was totally different in amount and even in nature, in the different provinces of France. There were countries of the *great gabelle,* of the *little gabelle, &c.,* and many of the *pays d'états* were exempt from this heavy impost altogether. The price of salt varied accordingly, and that which was only worth three deniers in one place, was of the value of thirteen sous in the next village. The consequence was, that many frauds and a most extensive system of smuggling prevailed. The only right course upon this subject, was to consolidate the various duties into one low tax, and lay on other duties to supply the deficiency. Instead of this simple

method, the regulations of Colbert tended only to form into a formal system, an absurd, impossible, and anomalous taxation. In the countries where the *gabelle* was high, the people were obliged to consume a certain quantity of salt. This quantity was fixed at a *minot*, or three bushels for fourteen persons. On the other hand, where the tax was light and the price consequently low, the consumption was limited, and the inhabitants were only allowed to buy fourteen pounds a year for each person. Thus the people were obliged to buy salt where it was dear, and to restrict themselves where it was cheap. With the same view of preventing a fraudulent trade, the provinces where the tax was easy, were ordered to consume a different kind from that used where the fiscal tyranny flourished in full vigour. There are many more such regulations, but those I have mentioned are sufficient to shew the absurdity and misgovernment which prevailed.*

The next department of the revenue upon which I shall touch, is the *aides* or excise. These were raised by Colbert from about one million five hundred thousand livres, to twenty-one million; this enormous augmentation was chiefly procured by taking possession of the *octrois*, or duties of entrance into towns. Many of these had been alienated by the crown, and others had always formed a part of the revenues of the towns in which they were levied. Colbert seized Excise.

* A story related by Madame de Sévigné, gives a curious notion of the discontent of the people at the *gabelle*, and their extraordinary ignorance. A curé of Brittany had bought a clock, which he put up with great satisfaction; a mob collected to look at it; "it is the *gabelle*," said some one; the crowd murmured, and presently the clock would have been destroyed, had not the curé interfered, and assured the people it was not the *gabelle*, but the *jubilee*. So true it is that the best way to overturn a public lie, is to tell another in the opposite direction.

them all for the crown, united them into one farm, and soon paid both the capital and interest of the sums for which they had been mortgaged. The policy of this measure was unquestionable; the right is doubtful.

Internal Commerce.

One of the greatest evils of the country, as I have before said, was the restriction of internal commerce. Colbert did not apply a radical cure to this evil; but he certainly made some progress in amendment, by consolidating the duties of different kinds into one. He left, it is true, the poor wine of one province, to pay more than the rich wine of another, and many vexations of the same sort. But in the preamble to the edict upon this subject, the evil is so fully described, that it is clear the minister meant at one time or other to encounter it. After recording, that from fear of the Barbary powers, "foreigners had made themselves masters of all the commerce "by sea, even that which was carried on from port to port "within the kingdom;" it is laid down as a principle, that the most solid means of restoring commerce is the reduction of duties. It is declared, that some of these taxes are so complex that it is difficult to trade, and "there is a danger of being deceived by the variety of duties, and the "manner of levying them." It is observed, that what was called the *nouvelle imposition* of 1599, was inconvenient, because it was to be levied in districts, consisting of a certain number of parishes, out of which nothing could go without paying this tax. It is acknowledged to be "almost impossible that so great a number of taxes should not cause many "disorders," and that persons in trade, from ignorance of the subject, were obliged to trust the clerks of the farmers of the taxes, who had an interest in deceiving them. In the body of

the decree which follows, many of these taxes are consolidated, and certain towns are made free of duty as places of *entrepot*; but no means were taken to abolish entirely internal duties.*

Public Debt.

Colbert proceeded in a very arbitrary manner with respect to the government debt. Much of the stock in the market had been obtained fraudulently by persons, who instead of advancing money, had promised to extinguish part of the old debt, and had never fulfilled their engagement. In consequence of confusion in the accounts, the interest was often paid several times over; while peculation and extortion of every kind prevailed in all parts of the unwieldy and complicated machine. Colbert entrusted the revision of the whole debt to a chamber of justice, a measure alarming certainly to all capitalists who might be inclined to lend their money to the government; but rendered justifiable perhaps in this instance, by the extent and enormity of the abuses that had prevailed. By the decrees of this chamber of justice, given in 1663, all interest on stock created since 1656 was suppressed; reserving a right to those who had bought it, to be paid in money the sums they had given for it. After some redemptions, partially and irregularly made, it was at length decided by a decree of the same chamber of justice, that three hundred and eighty-four million of livres, of treasury bills, were false, and should be immediately annulled. The

* Of the value of these compared to the vexations they occasioned, some notion may be formed from what happened at Lyons. Two duties called *Resve et Haut passage*, formed a perpetual grievance at that place. At length they were taken off in 1555, on condition of an indemnity to the collectors, and the payment of an annual duty of no more than two thousand five-hundred livres. Forbonnais, t. i. p. 287.

King pardoned the guilty on condition of their paying to the treasury the fines his council should impose upon them. This measure seems arbitrary and irregular, but the subsequent steps of Colbert were much more unjust and despotic. By a public decree, he suddenly reduced the interest of the public debt, and paid off a great part of it at a lower price than the stock would have brought in the market. Some who held property in the funds, were reduced to half their fortune, and then paid at the market price; others who had advanced loans to government, were obliged to pay a supplementary sum in order to obtain the interest of the former loan; the arrears owing by the government were not paid at all. In short, the measures of Colbert amounted to a public bankruptcy. This breach of faith shook the credit of the government, produced a general alarm in all families that had money in the funds, and a long continued distrust in the public securities. The minister was never able afterwards to borrow at less interest than ten per cent.*

Loans. Upon Colbert's first assuming the direction of the finances, he was so impressed with the mischief produced by loans, that he issued a decree, forbidding contractors to lend money to the state under pain of death. When he afterwards found himself obliged to borrow to meet the exigencies of war, he did not think it necessary to repeal his own law; and it is a singular fact, that those who lent money to the government were, to the end of the monarchy, liable to capital punishment. An anecdote is related, however, which shews how much Colbert continued personally averse to loans. During the war of 1672, Louvois advised the having recourse

* Forbonnais, vol. ii. p. 339.

to this expedient, which Colbert vehemently opposed. The two ministers were allowed to argue the question in the presence of the King, assisted by M. de Lamoignon, who, after hearing the discussion, gave his opinion in favour of loans. Upon leaving the conference, Colbert said to Louvois, "You "triumph, but do you think you have done an action becoming a man of virtue? Do you imagine, that I did not know as "well as yourself, that money was to be found by borrowing? "but do you know as well as I do, the man with whom we have "to treat? his passion for representation, for great undertakings, for every kind of expense? The road is now open to "loans, and consequently to expenses and taxes without limit; "you will answer for it to the nation and to posterity."

Offices.

One of the great evils to which Colbert turned his attention, was the excessive number of offices. In an edict which Lewis published on this subject he is made to say that, "the "best part of the inhabitants of towns have quitted all other "employments to devote themselves to the holding of offices;" and that "the great number of placemen, and particularly of those whose duty respects the distribution of taxes, "and the levy of *tailles* and *gabelles*, has multiplied the "list of persons exempt from the *tailles*; increased law suits "among the payers on account of the inequality of the assessment; exempted the rich at the expense of the poor, and "given rise to so many vexations, and constraints under "various titles, by many and various receivers and clerks, "that the country people (*nos peuples de la campagne*), "have found it difficult to subsist." By the edict which follows this preamble, all offices created since 1630, the treasurers, and comptrollers general, comptrollers of bridges

and roads, of provisions, of garrisons, and many others, were suppressed, the King paying by instalments the sums they had given for their offices, which, in general, were not more than five or six times the amount of the salary.

This operation enabled Colbert to announce that there would be a diminution of the *tailles* every successive year; the addition made to the number who paid, by the suppression of offices, was in itself a reduction to the rest.

Further measures were taken with the same view. All offices belonging to the collection and management of the revenue had hitherto been bought, and the holders considering their places as freehold, thought themselves exempt from all authority and control. Colbert declared the offices redeemable, and obliged the holders to find security for the payment of the taxes they collected. Many were actually redeemed and conferred upon persons of known character and probity.

Under the ministry of Colbert, almost all the taxes were farmed, except the *taille*. One duty, however, which had hitherto been farmed, viz. that of tobacco, he converted into a royal monopoly, forbidding at the same time, the cultivation of the plant in France.

The receivers were an important branch of administration. They received five sous per livre, or twenty-five per cent. for collection, besides large allowances for extraordinary expenses. Before this time they used also to withhold the money collected nearly as long as they pleased, and often lent it to the King at an exorbitant interest, instead of paying it as soon as due. For the receivers general were usually the persons who advanced loans to the government, their capital being

considered security for other subscribers. It is manifest that this arrangement was vicious, and some strong remedy ought to have been devised. Colbert, however, allowed the receivers general to continue the chief loan contractors, and to hold offices that gave a profit, of eight or ten per cent. on the taxes. But he fixed the sum for extraordinary expenses at about four and a half per cent., and obliged these officers to give in their accounts regularly.

Domains of the Crown.

The domains of the crown were subjected to new management, and made alienable. In order to maintain the navy, the management of private property in woods was greatly interfered with. No woods, to whomsoever belonging, were allowed to be cut, but at certain intervals, and the proprietors were directed to leave standing a number of large trees, and *especially the finest*. The woods belonging to the church and to corporations, were made subject to still more restraints and prohibitions.

Corn Trade.

This spirit of interference, this passion of carrying regulation into every thing, was the great error of Colbert. By an order of the parliament, of August 1661, which he seems to have procured, or at least approved of, all persons were forbidden to form any magazine of corn, or to join in any association for trading in that article of food. This law, issued in conformity to a very ignorant prejudice, produced a scarcity in the following year, and afterwards a very low price of grain. The farmers were unable to carry on with profit a trade so restricted, and in the end, cultivation was greatly diminished.

Commerce and Manufactures.

The same spirit of activity, partly beneficial, and partly mischievous, was discernible in the measures of Colbert on the subjects of trade and manufactures. He made Dunkirk

and Marseilles free ports, and took off a duty on tonnage all over the kingdom. He took off custom house duties to the amount of fifty per cent. with the view of increasing consumption; a very wise and judicious measure. He established, and assisted with large sums of money, exclusive companies to trade with the East and West Indies, a step of more doubtful policy. It is perhaps a question, whether such companies may not at first direct the enterprise and industry of a nation into a useful channel, which from the caution of individual merchants, and the want of capital in the country, might otherwise fail to be explored. But the advantage of introducing them is counterbalanced by the difficulty which is always found in opening the trade, when these nursing companies are no longer necessary. The connexions they have formed, the peculiar knowledge they possess, and the property vested in their trade, are all brought with great and mischievous effect, to defraud the consumer and counteract the plans of a government which endeavours to deprive them of their monopoly.

Colbert introduced, and carried to a flourishing state, manufactures of plate glass, of carpets, of tapestry, of lace, and extended that of rich silk stuffs of Lyons; he bought from a person in England a stocking machine, which he introduced into the country; and created manufactories of steel, porcelain, and morocco leather. The most important, perhaps, of the manufactures he introduced, was that of Holland linen, brought by the Van Robais, and established at Abbeville. The manufactures of cloth and serges were augmented and improved. To rouse industry and encourage enterprize, Colbert gave a millon of livres annually to the manufacturers. This was a needless measure; the

love of gain is the best bounty upon industry; and mercantile sagacity is its own reward. But if this measure was useless, other steps which he took were positively mischievous. He established a new tariff of duties in 1667, which, bearing hard on the import of Dutch linen, induced Holland a few years afterwards, to retaliate on the French wines, and supply themselves from the country on the Rhine. He was over meddling in the controul of the manufactures themselves. Not only did he write general directions to the manufacturers on the management of their business, but he appointed inspectors to visit the manufacturing towns, to see that his rules were observed. Nay, he even ordered by a decree, that if the work was not made of the length and breadth, and according to the model prescribed, for the first offence, the article should be confiscated, and hung on a post with the maker's name upon it; for the second offence, the same penalty and a reprimand; and the third time, the workman was to be attached to the post himself by an iron collar. The minister who ordered, better deserved the punishment.

Every one knows the wise counsel of the merchant, who, when asked by Colbert what he could do for the manufactures and commerce of the country, replied "*Laissez faire* "*et laissez passer*," "Free labour, and free trade."

Yet with all these defects, the early years of Colbert's administration, upon the whole, gave promise of a great and essential improvement in the finances. In the year 1661, the revenue amounted to eighty-four million livres, and the charge of the debt, &c. to fifty-two millions, leaving about thirty-two millions for the public service. In 1670, the whole revenue was ninety-six millions, and the interest of the debt twenty-

six, so that seventy millions were clear income. During this time, likewise, large reductions of taxes had been made. But the wisdom which had discovered in some degree, and in some parts of the administration, the right path of prosperity during peace, failed as soon as a call was made upon the kingdom for extraordinary resources. Colbert then immediately resorted to the vicious and ruinous means of his predecessors.

To provide for the exigences of the war of 1671, a great number of new offices were created and sold; and the most enormous profits were given to the lenders, who advanced money to the government. The trades which were not yet confined in the trammels of a company, or corporation, were ordered to form one and receive a statute, and those that were already formed, to take out letters of confirmation; both of which operations were attended by a tax.* During the following years the war measures of Colbert were chiefly disadvantageous loans, the interest of which was paid by restoring ancient abuses, and renewing ruinous expedients.

Review of Colbert's administration.

On reviewing the whole administration of Colbert, we shall be disposed to doubt if he may justly be called a great minister. With prodigious industry, and many right views, he seems to have taken no permanent advantage of the circumstances of extraordinary good fortune in which he found himself placed. He did not eradicate any one of the vicious methods by which the people were oppressed and the sovereign betrayed. He left the *tailles*, the *gabelle*, the restrictions on internal trade, the enormous profits of the farmers general, the disorder and profligacy of the contractors, and the sale of offices in the revenue. He preferred trying experiments

* Desmaret's Rapport sur les Finances.

upon the country by doubtful and complicated measures, to the wholesome influence of just liberty and wise forbearance; which are as superior to his system, as the simple and sublime theory of Newton to the cycles and epicycles of ancient astronomy. Hence his institutions, which flourished when he was at their head, decayed when he died. The management of the finances was still infected by that irremediable vice, the want of an efficient controul. No persons appointed in the view of public good, examined the accounts and checked the expenditure. The revenue continued to be paid by misery, levied by extortion, expended by pride, corruption, and extravagance.

With respect to the encouragement of manufactures during this period, it will be observed, from what has been stated in the beginning of this review, that France was in the enjoyment of many useful and important manufactures, before the reign of Lewis; and that many of those introduced by Colbert were articles of luxury, intended only for the limited consumption of the rich. Voltaire, in speaking of the ministry of Richelieu, exclaims, "no tapestry, no cut glass, no plate "glass."* Yet it does not follow, that a nation without these costly manufactures might not be extremely rich, prosperous, and civilized. The introduction of these fabrics of pomp, may be considered among the illusions of the reign of Lewis. The most important manufacture Colbert introduced, viz. that of Holland linen, was only obtained by a sacrifice of the French vineyards, and the agricultural population of the country. There were other introductions, those of leather, hardware, &c., which did not flourish. The prohibition to manufacture in

* Essai sur les Mœurs, c. 176.

any form, but that approved of by a minister; the obliging all artisans to enter into corporations; the prohibition to form magazines of corn; must be considered as great and important blemishes in the financial character of this celebrated man.

On the other hand it must be allowed, that Colbert worked with that spirit which, of itself, produces energy in the country where it governs, that the canal of Languedoc does him immortal honour, and that, by taking off some of the duties of customs, he gave an impetus to the industry of the nation.

Character of Colbert.

The reader may be curious to know something of the character of a man who has occupied us so long. It is not one which requires much penetration to fathom, or great nicety of touch to describe. Colbert, like Sully, was reckoned harsh and uncivil by the courtiers, whom he treated with little ceremony, and considered with unspeakable contempt. They at once dreaded and hated the cold looks, dry manner, and rude speeches, with which he received them every time they entered his antichamber, to ask some favour for themselves, at the expence of the king and of the nation. The profligacy which he saw around him, induced him to close both his heart and his mind to all solicitation; hence, he became obstinate and self willed, believing no man honest but himself, and rejecting advice, not only from thinking meanly of the counsel, but from suspicion of the counsellors. Hence, likewise, he was somewhat unscrupulous in his means, conceiving, that if he served the country, it little mattered whether he observed the strict rules of justice towards persons, with whom the law of morality was no obligation.

It must be allowed, that the rise of Colbert was attended with circumstances, which a biographer would be glad to

omit. His conduct to Fouquet, it is more easy to defend than to approve; and although we may think a man who thus conducts himself useful for the public service, we should be loth to come across him in the relations of private life. He is said likewise to have behaved ungratefully to Le Tellier, to whom he had been clerk. With these blots upon his fame, which however, are common to him, with many of those who have risen high from a low station, it cannot be denied that he displayed great zeal, honesty, activity, and perseverance, in the cause of the public welfare. He declared to the King, and no doubt with sincerity, on the occasion of the Polish election, that an unnecessary banquet, to the amount of three thousand francs, gave him incredible pain: but that he would sell all he had, and pawn his wife and children, if necessary, to carry on the war of the state. No minister certainly ever exceeded him in zeal for his master's glory. In his habits the reader will not be surprised to hear he was severely punctual. He kept his clerks sixteen hours a day at work. His nephew, who was appointed to come every morning at seven o'clock, was one day a quarter of an hour behind the time: he made his excuse that there had been a ball at the palace, and that the attendants were asleep when he knocked at the door. "You had only to "come a quarter of an hour earlier;" said Colbert, "you "would have waited that time, and have been here at the hour "fixed." What is not so easy of belief is, that this rigid financier was vain, and wished to make out a pedigree that might give lustre to his family. Yet such is said to have been the fact; and a curious story is told of his seeking, in the church of Rheims, for the tombs of his progenitors.

The last days of Colbert were not of a nature to do honour to the King, or to encourage others to undertake a similar task. The labour of his triple ministry exhausted his mind and spirits. Several little incidents occurred, which created a coolness between him and his master. With a noble zeal for toleration, he had opposed the revocation of the edict of Nantz, and incurred the enmity of the bigots in power. On a comparison of some of his expences with those of Louvois, he was found to be the least economical of the two, and received a reprimand for it from the mouth of the King. These crosses, though far from indicating his disgrace, fell on his mind; he grew ill, and became wretched. When Lewis sent a gentleman of his household to enquire after his health, the dying minister said, "I do not wish to hear the King spoken "of any more; let him now leave me quiet." He was disturbed by religious apprehensions; and with a phrase that bears a striking analogy to one which Shakspeare has put into the mouth of Wolsey, he observed, "If I had done for "God what I have done for the King, I might have been "saved twice over; but now," he added, "I do not know "what is to become of me."

Finances after the death of Colbert.

If in the course of what I have said of Colbert, I have made little mention of Lewis, it is because he appears to have had little to do with the measures proposed, except the original merit of bringing forward, by the advice of Mazarin, the minister who conceived them. He began the task of reform, indeed, in the most exemplary manner. He looked over the accounts every month, and ordered no money to be issued from the treasury without his signature. But the death of Colbert was a test of the capacity of Lewis, which he was

not able to bear, and he seems to have been quite incapable of following the path that this able man had traced out for him. The finances ever after depended on the will of the minister of the day; and in the whole history of France, there is not a period of greater mismanagement than the last thirty years of the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth. The three resources upon which his government relied, were loans at an extravagant rate of interest; the creation of a multitude of exemptions from taxes, under the title of offices, with ridiculous names; such as measurers of hay, inspectors of wigs, &c.; and a depreciation of the currrency, frequently renewed. When, by the carelessness or corruption of the administration, the contractors for loans and warlike stores had heaped together a mass of ill-gotten wealth, the government had no better resource than to appoint a commission, which, with little enquiry, confiscated three or four millions sterling of the property of these persons; thus imitating the disorder, rapacity, and injustice of a Turkish Sultan, rather than the justice and legal forms of a Christian state. It was in vain that some of the persons taxed, pretended they had never been concerned in buying stock; the order was irrevocable; and those supposed to be the most culpable were sent to the Bastile.* Desmarets, who took the management of the finances in 1709, has been praised for clear perceptions, and enlarged views; nor does he seem totally unworthy of the character he has received. Yet what were his financial measures? A national bankruptcy; depreciation of the currency; and a too rapid attempt to restore it to its former value.

Of the general system of taxation in France, and the evils

* Dangeau, 12th and 20th of November, 1710.

it produced, I shall speak on another occasion. Suffice it to say at present, that Lewis the Fourteenth, by expending eighteen thousand millions of francs, in the course of his reign,* but especially by his fraudulent bankruptcies, and still more fraudulent alterations of the value of the coin, made the beginning of that mighty deficit, that great breach, through which the patriots of 1789 marched to the capture and destruction of the monarchy.

Legislation of Lewis.

We have now to consider Lewis in the character of a legislator. Very early in his reign, he resolved to form new codes or ordinances of civil and criminal law; to consolidate the various laws of his predecessors; to reform what was amiss; and to make the statutes of his kingdom consistent and intelligible. For this purpose, he appointed a commission to digest and prepare the work; the Chancellor Seguier, Lamoignon, Talon, Pussort, and Bignon, were the chief members. In 1667 the civil code was published; the criminal code, one for commerce, one for the navy, another for manufactures, another for forests and fisheries, followed. The design of Lewis was laudable and even grand, but the success was not equal to it; of all his objects he succeeded only in one of the least importance. The ordinances of this reign are allowed to be written in a clear, simple style, superior to that of more recent laws; but if we look beyond this, we find that they authorize an unjust mode of trial, preserve nearly all the barbarities of ancient times, and leave untouched the evil of having a separate system of laws in every separate province. The mode of trial, on what is now called the code of procedure, was grounded upon an ordinance of 1539, and that

* At the rate of about fourteen million pounds sterling a year.

code instituted forms and regulations rigorous and unfair in the extreme. Lamoignon protested against it in the council; he shewed that it was more severe than that of the Roman law, or of any neighbouring nation; but bigotry and ancient habits prevailed, and the edict was renewed. According to this code, the witnesses against a prisoner were first examined secretly, without allowing the accused to be confronted with them. This provision was founded upon the words of the Roman law, *testes intrare judicii secretum*, which were thus, perhaps falsely, interpreted. The witnesses left alone, one after the other with the judge, were interrogated by him in the manner most likely to criminate the prisoner, and if ignorant witnesses were led too far in their first depositions, they could not afterwards retract without being tried for perjury, a crime punished with death. This custom was a fertile source of false testimony and unjust convictions.

Let us add to this, that the prisoner himself was, according to the French mode of trial, closely examined by the judge to furnish proofs of his own guilt. Far from adopting the humane maxim of English law, that no person is obliged to criminate himself, the whole aim of the French proceeding was to obtain by any means, from the person accused, an avowal of his criminality. But an ignorant and frightened prisoner interrogated by a judge, who does not hesitate to employ all the skill of an advocate for the purpose of obtaining a conviction, can hardly fail to betray some hesitation, to fall into some contradiction, to mistake some circumstance, which may strengthen the suspicion of his guilt. And it is found by experience, that when the accused is placed in the

situation of a witness, a guilty person endowed with sagacity and presence of mind is more likely to escape, than an innocent man, embarrassed by ignorance and timidity. But the examination of the French judges did not confine itself then, as it does now, to questioning only: the means of torture were employed, and the incoherent rhapsodies extorted by physical suffering, from weak frames and agitated nerves, were considered as proofs that the accused were guilty, when they ought only to have been taken as confessions that they were human.* The prisoner was not by law allowed to have an advocate, or even to bring forward any witnesses in his favour.† The only compensation for all these hardships to the accused was, that perjury in a witness was punished with death.‡

The judges were numerous, and two thirds of the number were sufficient to condemn a man to death. Can it be just to take away the life of a human being, of whom it may be said, that the chances are only two to one he has been proved guilty?

The punishments enacted by the code of Lewis were ex-

* Torture was abolished in part in 1780: totally a year or two before the revolution. The rest of this objectionable mode of trial still remains; the prisoner is examined by the judge in the most insidious manner. I myself saw a man, accused of high treason, examined on his trial in this manner: Judge. Did —— bring a proclamation to you, and read it by your bed side on such a day? Prisoner. No. The judge asked a hundred other questions; he then resumed: When —— read the proclamation to you, was he sitting by your bed side? Prisoner. He never read any proclamation to me. The accused, in consequence of this mode of trial, form what they call a *system;* that is to say, they arrange upon principles of policy, quite independent of truth or falsehood, what facts to own and what to deny; the existence of a *system* of this kind is openly recognized by the French judges, and the more candid of them acknowledge that the interrogation is a test rather of the abilities, than of the innocence or guilt of the accused.

† Esprit des Lois, b. 29, c. 11. ‡ Ibid.

tremely severe. Death was too frequently inflicted without sufficient cause; a robbery of the person on the road was punished capitally, as well as a murder; the receiver of stolen goods forfeited his life as well as the thief. Witchcraft, heresy, and unnatural crimes, were punished according to the laws of France by fire. The method of putting this punishment in execution at the stake was dreadful. When Madame Voisin was burnt, M. de Sévigné observed to a judge, that it was a shocking thing to burn her by a slow fire. "Oh! Sir," said the judge, "there are certain alleviations on account of the weakness of "the sex." "What, do they strangle them?" "No, but bil- "lets of wood are thrown upon them, and the executioners "tear their heads with iron hooks."*

In different parts of France, the law was left after the codes of Lewis, as various as it had been before he reigned and legislated. In what were called *pays coutumiers*, the custom or common law prevailed; in other provinces, and in the *pays coutumiers*, when there was no law upon the subject, the Roman law was used. Five hundred different common laws were known in France, besides the custom of particular small towns; five hundred different interpretations were given to the written law in the various tribunals, and even the different chambers of the same parliaments. Hence an inextricable confusion. Confiscation of goods was, at Paris, the consequence of confiscation of body. That is to say, if a man was condemned to the gallies for life, a punishment inflicted for the lightest causes, his children lost his property. But this law was not admitted in the provinces governed by the Roman law, except in the district of the parliament of Toulouse; nor entirely in the Bourbonnais, Berri, Maine, Poitou, or Bretagne.

* Sévigné, 21st February, 1680.

It would thus appear that while every useful privilege of the *pays d'états* was subverted, Lewis and his successors preserved with scrupulous faith, every noxious and embarrassing distinction. Perhaps this was policy to prevent union; more probably it was ignorance; most probably, it was pedantry in lawyers, and indifference in the King. These questions concerning the life and death of his subjects, were not like that of the chair with a back to it, of vital importance to the monarchy.

Upon the whole, the law was left by Lewis the Fourteenth in a state nearly as barbarous, as it had been in the barbarous times of the League. No humanity, no regularity, no enlightened wisdom, was perceptible in the code of the great monarch. If we ask the reason why he did so little when he meant so much, we shall find that he failed from a want of genius. Having no great views of his own, he left the subject to a commission composed of the average lawyers of his day. Had he fixed upon Lamoignon, and two or three other men of large and liberal principles, he might have effected a great reform. But it is vain to expect that lawyers in the mass should amend bad laws. Men are naturally attached to the system in which they have been educated. Lavoisier and even Newton, were rejected as rash innovators, by many of the men of science who were their cotemporaries. Science, however, is sure to make progress at last; for experiment and geometry cannot fail to convince the young, and the least prejudiced. But in law, where an ingenious reason may be found for the most absurd institutions, and the dictum of a barbarous baron may be argued to be the result of the most profound reflection, the advance is slower, and the result less certain. Indeed, I am not sure whether it may not be said,

that the more absurd and contradictory the law, the more it recommends itself to the minds of men accustomed to find arguments for every thing; practised in the art of making the worse appear the better reason, and delighting in the possession of a science, the foundations of which are not discernible by the vulgar.

To the faults of the criminal and civil law of the kingdom, we must add the vicious manner of administering it, and the oppression of that which may be called the state law of France.

The Bastile was the prison usually employed by the police of Lewis. In the early registers of this prison, it appears that most of those detained there were prisoners for trial; but afterwards the imprisonment was used as an arbitrary punishment without trial. The Bastile may be said to have contained generally two classes of persons. The first consisted of those, who in any way disturbed the tranquillity of the capital of an arbitrary prince, by disorders in the streets, by private quarrels, by pretending to inspiration, by quackery, in short, by any act that might excite attention, and ruffle the smooth surface of supine obedience, which despotism is so vain of obtaining. The other class, were those who more directly interfered with the government; by printing or publishing pamphlets, by composing or singing irreverent songs against the King or his mistresses, or by indiscreet conversation. The evil of these latter arrests, was that they took place on suspicion, without any regular evidence. Thus Voltaire tells us, that the Comte de Bussy Rabutin, was confined in the Bastile for a year and a half, not for the *Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*, of which he was the author, but for a song he was imagined to have written. Hundreds of others, Voltaire him- The Bastile.

self among them, have suffered in the same manner. To enquire whether these persons actually did write the lampoons attributed to them, was beneath the dignity of the state, which might be committed if they were proved innocent; and the imprisoned man himself was often the last to know, or to suspect the offence for which he was suffering punishment. A few cases extracted from the register of the Bastile, will shew however, better than any description, the nature of the system.

1663.* *Pradier*, Liberated after two months imprisonment, on condition that he will have nothing more to do with newspapers.

Edmund Coquier, formerly a servant of M. Fouquet; this man had a secret press, where there was printed for M. Fouquet, a book called "*Réponse à la Réplique du Chevalier Talon.*"

1664. *Robert Hoyau*, jeweller, suspected of intelligence with M Fouquet, when his trial was in preparation.

1684. *La nommée Besnoit, dite d'Arnonville. Femme mechante qui avoit tenu des propos.*

1685. At this time, begins a register in folio of 280 pages, carefully enclosed in a portfolio of morocco leather; each page is divided into eleven columns, the tenth of which is "*motif de la détention des prisonniers,*" and the eleventh, "*Observations.*" Under the tenth head, there is frequently no entry whatever.

1686. *Le Sieur Duprez*, his wife, his daughters, and his children of the pretended reformed religion. For having intended (*voulu*) leaving the kingdom.

* These extracts are made from a book called "*La Bastile Dévoilée, ou Recueil de Pièces authentiques pour servir à son histoire.*"

Le Sieur de Beringhen, Conseiller au parliament de Paris. Religion.

Le Sieur Marquis de Campagnac. Religion.

La Dame Desfontaines, and her two daughters. Religion.

1687. *L'Abbé Dubois, hommes très méchant et chicaneur.*

François Brindejouy, chapelain de Mauregard. For speaking against the state.

1689. *Poupaillard,* bad Catholic (this motive occurs in every page).

Le Duc de la Force. Religion.

A person called *La Cour. Homme de difficile garde.*

1690. *Jean Blondeau,* hermit. *Tenu pour suspect* (this motive occurs frequently).

1691. *Jean Moreau,* detained five years, for having dealt in smuggled lace.

Le Comte de la Vauguyon and the *Sieur de Courtenay,* for quarrels amongst themselves.

Pierre Jean Mere, professing medicine at Paris. For bad remedies which he had distributed: detained thirty years, and then transported to Charenton.

1692. The pretended *Marquis Desportes,* his wife, his cook, his footman, and the persons called *Ranson, Chabot, de Lorme,* and *Chevalier.* All entered the same day without observation, motive, or order of any known minister.

Page 120 wanting. Supposed to be the iron mask.

1700. *Le Sieur le Bar,* arrested at the age of 76; died in the Bastile at the age of 90.

1703. *Pierre François, Marquis d'Arenbergh* (without any specified motive). He was the liberator of Quesnel.

Le Sieur Duplessis, Flamand, detained eleven years, for

having contributed to the escape of the Père Quesnel from the house of the Archbishop of Malines.

Le Sieur le Coq, and Casimir his valet, spies of Marlborough and Prince Eugene.

Nothing can prove more clearly than these extracts, the uncertainty, the injustice, the arbitrary cruelty of the imprisonments, inflicted by the King and his ministers; nothing can more evidently demonstrate the necessity of separating the judicial from the executive power. Some are confined for real crimes, some for indiscretion; some on vague suspicion; one man is imprisoned for conscientious adherence to his religious opinions; another receives a dreadful punishment for a very slight offence; a third is confined for a crime wholly fictitious; and others for acts of virtue and merit, which may have drawn down the vengeance of some minister's mistress, or chamberlain's servant.

The administration of justice to the country in general, was extremely partial, irregular, and unjust. If a poor man was condemned to the gallies for a term of years, there was little probability of his ever escaping, and his sentence was converted into a punishment for life.* The little parliaments of the provinces, and the judges named by the *seigneurs*, still continued to use the sword of justice for their own profit, and

* Dangeau Lémontey, 25 November, 1697. The whole passage is so characteristic of the government of Lewis, that I cannot resist the wish of transcribing it. "Le roi à résolu d'ôter de dessus ses galères beaucoup de ceux qui y ont fait leur temps, quoique la coutume fût établi depuis long temps d'y laisser également ceux qui étaient condamnés pour toute leur vie et ceux qui y étaient condamnés pour un certain nombre d'années. On en tirera aussi tous les invalides, et on a résolu d'envoyer tous ces miserables-là dans nos îles de l'Amérique pour les peupler."

the oppression of the people. But if, on the other hand, a person high at court or a noble of any degree, committed a crime, the notoriety of the fact was the only punishment he underwent; and many daring offenders, relying upon the injustice of their cause, insulted the laws with impunity.* Living in the atmosphere of a profligate court, Lewis was accustomed to consider acts of kindness to his nobles as proofs of his goodness and humanity, though, perhaps, the reward of a courtier was the scourge and the punishment of thousands of his poorer subjects. This is one of the evils of despotism. Indeed, of all the bad effects which unlimited power produces on the character of man, perhaps the worst is, that it thus corrupts the conscience, and stifles the voice of nature. Who is there that can hear the continual cry of approbation echoing all his actions, and not become in some sort persuaded of the infallibility of his judgment? The most scandalous and mischievous profusion, a king is taught to consider as generosity; the most unequal interposition of authority is applauded as an act of justice. I will take as an instance, a story, as it is related by Dangeau, the most assiduous and attached of the king's courtiers. " 12th February, 1689. M. de Maurevel was waked " early in the morning in his own house by a great noise, " which he heard in his court-yard and in the street. It was " caused by some bailiffs (*sergens*), who were come to take the " horses in his stable, for the pretended debt of a tailor. He " put on a dressing gown, and not having been able to make " this *canaille* listen to reason, and one having fired at him,

* Madame de Sévigné tells us of some one, who went to see himself hung in effigy for contumacy, and afterwards supped and slept at the house of the judge who had condemned him.

" he took his pistols and shot two of them. The rest " dispersed very quickly. M. de Maurevel came here to " give the King an account of what he had done, and to " ask pardon and justice, at the same time offering to go to " prison. The King received him very well, and told him to " stay at Versailles, till it was known if the affair had passed " as he had related. It appears this business will not turn ill " for him."—" 13th February. M. de Maurevel has received " his pardon from the King, and the safe conduct necessary for " his person, and for all his people (*gens*). It was impossible " to be better treated."* That indeed it was! Here we find two men killed, said to be officers of justice; and so little enquiry made, that on the very next day, the slayer was set at liberty without the smallest censure. Did the King examine any one on the part of those who had been the sufferers? Did he ascertain whether these persons really fired at M. de Maurevel? At all events, however, his judgment was most precipitate, and evinced a dreadful indifference to the lives of persons, who were called by his courtiers, in the jargon of the day, " *canaille*." Yet no doubt his beneficence, was extolled by the titled and decorated slaves who formed his court. But if such was the favour shewn to M. de Maurevel, of whom no one ever heard, what partiality may we not believe to have been practised in behalf of the higher nobility and the immediate favourites of the sovereign? In fact, the privileged class may be considered as having, one and all, a letter of license; if they did not appear at the levee indeed, they were disgraced for ever, but as long as they merely cheated their creditors, oppressed their peasantry, and killed

* Dangeau. Lémontey, p. 46.

men of low birth in brawls, they might be sure of impunity and protection.

Judgment of Lewis.

Panegyrists of Lewis the Fourteenth, have told us of two noble judgments* given by the King in the council, where he administered justice in person. One of these, is a decision in favour of some inhabitants of Paris, who had built upon land belonging to the crown; the other, is a judgment in the case of a Persian whose goods had been seized at the custom house, ordering the goods to be restored, and three thousand crowns presented to the Persian. Yet these are acts of generosity rather than of justice; and the latter was one of ostentation rather than of generosity. No doubt the expectation of that fame, which we are told attended the name of Lewis in the East, in consequence of this act, was one of his chief inducements to perform it. It is only in a barbarous age, or an Asiatic despotism; in the time of St. Lewis, or in the empire of Haroun-al-Raschid, that much good can be produced by the sovereign administering justice in person; in a civilized nation, and an enlightened age, the best thing he can do for his subjects, is to make good laws, and entrust their execution to men who will judge without fear, and without favour.

State of the Country.

The people of the country, properly so called, seem never to have flourished under the reign of Lewis. There was splendour and ostentation at court; pomp and profusion among the nobility; some activity in commerce and manufactures; but the peasantry seem to have been throughout, in a state of suffering, ignorance, and degradation.

The year 1681, was the period at which the greatness of

* "Beaux jugemens." Voltaire.

the French monarchy was at its acmé; when all the ambitious projects of Lewis had been crowned with success, and the other powers of Europe opposed no resistance to his designs. Yet, in this very year, Colbert, in a report to the King, in which he points out the danger of new loans, says expressly, " But that which is most important, and upon " which there is most cause to reflect, is *the very great misery* " *of the people;* all the letters which come from the provin- " ces whether of intendants, or receivers general, and even " those of bishops, speak of it."*

But if this was the condition of the people in a year of prosperity, we have evidence more than sufficient to prove, that the misery which existed in this most flourishing time of the monarchy, was aggravated during the period of difficulty and distress. The wars of the English revolution, and of the Spanish succession, reduced the country to a state which the people of the most feeble principality in Europe might look upon with pity. In 1694, an order was given to drive away all the poor who flocked from the country into Versailles, from a fear that their great number should infect the air.† The councils of Lewis, no longer guided by the severe order of Louvois, and the benevolent vigilance of Colbert, authorized the most dreadful oppressions, and connived at the most flagrant abuses. The collectors of taxes, intent upon amassing fortunes and favouring their own friends, laid waste the country by every variety of vexation, and by all the torturing engines of minute merciless pettifogging tyranny.

History has recorded the misery which accompanied the last war of Lewis, when the army was recruited by the famine

* Forbonnais, iii. 288. † Dangeau, Lémontey, 14th June, 1694.

in the provinces, and the labourers, whose cattle was taken from the plough by the collectors of the *taille*, filled the ranks of the troops on the frontiers, not because their country gave them any thing to defend, but because the state left them nothing to lose. Yet in the midst of the dreadful scarcity of 1709, Lewis appeared insensible to the distress and misery of his people. If we enquire the reason of this apparent want of feeling, we find that every one was desired not to mention the subject to the king, for fear he should be overcome with grief.* Happy the nation whose rulers are not allowed even to know the misfortunes under which the people are sinking!

When peace was concluded, a new evil added to the general distress of the kingdom. The chief subject of embarrassment to the minister of finance, was the depreciation of the coin: he determined upon restoring it to very near its original value. In little more than two years, from April 1713 to September 1715, by eleven successive operations, the price of the marc of silver, which had been raised to forty-two livres, ten sous, was reduced to thirty livres ten sous, that is to say, about twenty-seven per cent. The opinion of Forbonnais upon this operation appears to me so sound and so instructive, that I cannot refrain from transcribing it. "It "would be unjust," says this author, "not to praise the inten- "tion; but it is evident that these diminutions, announced "for the space of two years, disturbed commerce to a very "great degree. If some wish to lend, few will be found to "borrow; the condition of debtors who are unable to free "themselves becomes very bad; there is besides, a new

* Mémoires de Madame, p. 41.

" uncertainty in property. From that moment, the more " rapid the operation, the less it will be felt. There " was another vice in these measures, which ought to have " induced the minister to abandon them. Since 1689, " money had been continually depreciated; all engagements " contracted for twenty-four years, were established in a coin " of a third less value than that which was to be in circulation " on the 1st of September, 1715; consequently the taxes were " to become heavier in the same proportion; the debtors of " the fundholders would have to pay their creditors a third " more than they had engaged for; a farmer who had en- " gaged to pay ten marcs of silver for his rent, was obliged " to pay fourteen, without any hope that his produce would " maintain its price. There must naturally have resulted a " dreadful misery in the country; a great void in consump- " tion, circulation, and in the public revenue. It is very evi- " dent that it was wrong to make the preceding depreciation; " but after twenty-four years of an augmented currency, these " great diminutions were a fatal blow. The only right ope- " ration at this time was to fix the coin immoveably at its " depreciated price."* The consequences thus sagaciously pointed out, did not fail to be felt. During the course of two years, the misery of the country kept continually augmenting; in the uncertainty of property, credit was nearly annihilated; money was wanting in circulation, consumption and labour diminished; usury, in vain prohibited, increased its profits, while prudent men were afraid to lay out their capital; the state lay without life or motion; the revenue mortgaged for ever; the surplus insufficient for necessary expenses, and this

* Forbonnais, t. 5.

consumed and expended by anticipation. A famine ensued, in the train of these evils, of which it was the consequence and the climax; country houses were left to ruin, and the land abandoned by the farmers, without live stock, or instruments of husbandry. Two years after the cessation of war, peace had not yet made its benefits perceived; and the excess of misery had produced in the people, that apathy which seems to announce the fall of states.* It should not be omitted that the evils of this operation were not averted by being accompanied at the same time, with a forcible reduction of the interest of the public debt. The interest of money lent to the state was reduced by an edict to four per cent. But this measure, the injustice of which was the more manifest, since it comprehended debtors of different kinds, aggravated rather than relieved the embarrassments of commerce, and the want of confidence of capitalists.

We may now understand perhaps, why the people, sick of glory, and tired of the vain splendour which Lewis loved only for his own sake, viewed the last days of their monarch without regret, and accompanied his corpse with execrations.

Conclusion.

If we endeavour to sum up in our minds, the different parts of the government we have gone over, we shall be inclined to draw, as a result from the whole, that Lewis the Fourteenth was an industrious, and even a benevolent ruler, but not endowed with genius to direct his industry or wisdom in the application of his benevolence. He excelled in those parts of administration, which are at the same time the least difficult and the least important; in equipping troops, in expending large sums upon magazines of war, in holding

* Forbonnais, t. 5, p. 64.

magnificent courts, and building sumptuous palaces. He failed in those larger and more lofty functions of sovereign power, which consist in providing for the happiness of a people; in giving equal protection to all classes; in allaying religious dissentions; in extending industry and commerce by liberal principles; in making taxation as light, as certain, and as justly proportioned as possible; in laying the foundations of future prosperity to his kingdom, when he himself should be no more. If he augmented the territory of France, it was by destroying the sinews of her internal strength, and leaving his successors embarrassed by the obligations he had contracted. If he maintained domestic peace, he at the same time sowed the seeds of future discord, by augmenting the importance of his plebeian, and preserving at the same time the privileges of his noble subjects. The manufacturing and commercial classes, who in the course of a long internal tranquillity, acquired riches, intelligence, and knowledge, formed no part of the constitution of the monarchy; they were excluded from the pale of power, and became the natural favourers of those writers, who towards the end of the reign of Lewis, were preparing to attack his fame, and ridicule the frame of government he had formed and established. This was a great and very obvious defect in his policy. All his attention had been directed to please, and at the same time depress his nobility; but in so doing, he raised another great body by their side, which he forgot to conciliate by privileges, and could no longer terrify by a display of force and authority.

There are some measures, certainly, which it would be unjust to blame Lewis for not effecting, as they required either the knowledge of a posterior age, or the intuition of a

man of genius. But there are others which it is astonishing he should not have effected. He might have established a wise and certain system of taxation, that would have deprived his intendants of the arbitrary power they so much abused. He might, when in the summit of his power, have laid a foundation for taxing the nobles and the clergy, in due proportion to their wealth. He might have abolished the *taille*, the *gabelle*, and the *corvées*, and have subjected his people to the burdens of the state, in proportion, not to their rank, but to their wealth. He might have introduced a more humane code of laws, and assumed to the state the whole administration of justice, abolishing the authority and peculation of the petty lords. He would thus have united all classes in support of the monarchy, and paved the way for the tranquil introduction of those changes, which progressive time, and increased civilization might require.

It must be remembered, however, that Lewis the Fourteenth conferred one benefit upon France of the utmost importance, though perhaps due more to the age in which he lived, than to himself. His administration established the rule of order, and thus advanced his people a step in the progress of civilization. Those who had property, cultivated it in peace; those who had leisure, could pass it in enjoyment; those who were industrious, could pursue their occupations in safety. Although this is far from being all that is required of a government, yet it was a great improvement upon any government that France had seen before. No inequality or pressure of taxation, could inflict misery equal to that caused by the noble highwaymen, who infested the country in the preceding age. In estimating personal merit, perhaps, we

ought to give the credit of this change to Richelieu, but in chronological accuracy, we must fix the period of its accomplishment during the age of Lewis the Fourteenth. Under the protection of law, and a strong executive power, commerce flourished; manufactures encreased; arts were promoted; nay, liberty itself was destined to be finally the result of the knowledge and science, which internal peace had fostered. For the liberty of modern Europe, different from that of ancient states, is the offspring, not of anarchy, but of order. In England, it sprang from the arbitrary reign of Elizabeth; in Holland, from that of Charles the Fifth; in France, from the despotism of Lewis the Fourteenth.

Literature.

It is to this same internal peace, that we are to ascribe the much vaunted glory of letters in this age; and it was in this way that Lewis most effectually promoted them. For I own it appears to me that the direct encouragement given by Lewis, was rather an obstacle than an aid to the real splendour of literature. What he actually did, was neither great in its total amount, nor discriminating in its separate parts. The intention, undoubtedly, was good, but the incapacity of his agent, did much to defeat his intentions; and posterity must laugh to find that a heap of unknown scribblers were more richly rewarded than Racine and Boileau.

In fact, the best writers of the age, were beyond the sphere of influence of the monarch. Corneille is imbued with the flavour of another age; of times of greater independence and a less general servility to power; La Fontaine was removed far from the court by the simplicity of his character, and never had a share of the bounty of Lewis. Racine and Boileau, fairly considered, were not produced by royal mu-

nificence, but adopted by it after they had made their talents known; and I leave it to good judges of literature to say, whether the flight of their poetry has not been impeded by being fastened to the chariot of the court. The protection of Moliere against the hypocrites of the day is indeed a bright jewel in the crown of Lewis; but against this trophy is to be set the death of Racine, caused by the intemperate pride, and jealous anger of the monarch. The real advantage that literature derived from the reign of Lewis, was the same with that which was enjoyed by trade and commerce; the advantage of internal peace, and tranquillity. Indeed the maxim of "*Laissez faire*," may be applied to the one as well as to the other.

The literature of the age of Lewis the Fourteenth, continued for a century after its appearance, the prevailing literature of Europe. Much of this success must be attributed to the time in which it appeared; a time, when the arts of social life were generally spread, and the want of a general language of communication was felt, not by the learned only but by all. Latin was consequently discarded, and the language of the most powerful nation universally adopted. Had the merits of literature only been consulted, the poetry of England, though less perfect in execution, was far more noble in kind than that of France, and the poets of Italy, from Dante to Tasso, had all the polish of a civilized age, together with the strong conception of rude and republican times. But France had the same good fortune in her letters as in her arms. Italy had fallen to the poor conceits of Marini, and to belong to the seventeenth century, is a term of reproach in her literary history. England abandoned her own glory

in poetry as in politics; and in the same age which saw Charles and James make their country subservient to foreign dictation, the reigning wits of the day disfigured Shakspeare, and neglected Milton. The authors who surrounded the French court carried refinement to its utmost pitch, and thus became the standard of every nation in Europe; the verses of Racine spread with the glory of Turenne through the world, and contributed their part to throw a glare round the age of Lewis the Fourteenth, which long blinded Europe, and still dazzles the bigotted and baser part of it.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

Views of the English Ministry which came into Office in 1710. *Sanguine hopes of the Tory Party. Question of the Succession. Unpopularity of the Ministry. Their divisions. Oxford and Bolingbroke. The Jacobites. Measures of the Whigs. Debates in Parliament. Death of the Queen. Succession of the House of Hanover. Proceedings in Parliament. Rebellion of* 1715. *Punishment of the Rebels. Septennial Act.*

BEFORE relating the occurrences which happened in France after the death of Lewis the Fourteenth, it may be convenient to take a view of the circumstances which immediately preceded and followed the establishment of the Electors of Hanover on the throne of England; an event of scarce less moment, both to Great Britain and to Europe, than the Revolution which placed the crown on the head of King William.

Views of the Tory Ministry.

When, by a conjunction of the most despicable intrigues at court, and the most unfounded clamour in the nation, Queen Anne was induced, and enabled to dismiss the ministers and the general, to whom her reign owes all its glories, the leaders of the Tory party came into power animated by many hopes of private advantage, and some designs of public policy. Their principal objects indeed, were the conservation of the places they had acquired; great employments to themselves, great opportunities of rewarding those who had helped to raise them, and of hurting those who stood in opposition to them.* But mingled with these selfish and

* Letter to Sir William Wyndham, p. 19.

factious views, were some projects which they conceived beneficial to the nation. They wished to draw the country out of the war, which, as they thought, had been too long prolonged, and to disentangle her from those alliances which William the Third had made, and the Whig ministry of the Queen maintained and strengthened. It was their settled opinion, that England had been needlessly involved by King William in the concerns of the continent; that her true policy was not to watch the balance of power, but to keep aloof from the disputes of foreign states; to be engaged in the relations of commerce with every nation, but in strict alliance with none. To crown all, the Tory ministers hoped so to break the Whig party as to secure themselves during the Queen's reign, trusting that they should soon become too considerable not to make theirown terms in all events which might happen afterwards; concerning which, few, if any of them, had any settled resolution.*

The means of accomplishing these ends, appeared at first sight amply sufficient. The great body of the landed proprietors formed the main force of the Tory party; to this strength, the Queen had now added the influence of government, while the trial of Sacheverel had brought them popularity, and rivetted the attachment of the clergy. So that their followers were wont to say, they were supported by the crown, the church, and the people. On the other hand, they were accustomed to look upon the Whigs as a weak minority in the nation, resting chiefly on foreign alliances, the bank and the trading interest, and therefore likely to fall in pieces when these props were taken away.†

* Letter to Sir William Wyndham, p. 22.

† "You may observe yourself and make others observe too, what a difference

The conclusion of the peace of Utrecht accomplished one of their chief objects. The event was hailed accordingly with the utmost joy by their adherents, who confidently looked forward to the glorious summer which might be expected to follow so propitious a spring. Yet in the midst of these sanguine anticipations, some untoward circumstances, which were overlooked by the generality, cast a damp into the bosoms of the leaders.

The first obstacle the ministers had to struggle with, was the very peace upon which they had calculated as the basis of their power. The nation was not yet exhausted by war; and even if it had been so, a mortifying and disappointing peace can never long be popular with a high spirited people. The opposition of the allies and the Whig party, had exhibited the ministry to Europe as the secret adherents of France, our ancient rival; and many who had most longed for peace, were disgusted with the orders given to the Duke of Ormond to separate his troops from those of the confederates; a measure which seemed to close a war of glory, by a disgraceful abandonment of our friends.

The business of the succession was likewise full of difficulties. Although Dr. Arbuthnot spoke of the Queen's health with a confidence which savoured more of party wishes, than of medical skill, her broken constitution and constantly re-

"there is between the true strength of this nation and the fictitious one of the "Whigs. How much time, how many lucky accidents, how many strains of "power, how much money must go to create a majority of the latter; on the other "hand, take but off the opinion that the crown is another way inclined, and the "church interest rises with redoubled force, and by its natural genuine strength." Bolingbroke's Correspondence, Nov. 10, 1710. See likewise his Letter to Wyndham.

turning fits of the gout, foreboded that her life could not last many years. As she grew older, she became more and more attached to the family from which she sprang, and looked forward with some anxiety to the chance of her brother's inheriting her crown. But the nation still bore an inveterate dislike to the Roman Catholic religion, and the very cry of the church in danger, by which the Tories had climbed to power, had made the people more alive than ever to the danger of a Popish reign. The ministry found it necessary, therefore, in all their public professions, and in all the speeches put into the mouth of the Queen, to declare an unshaken determination to maintain the act which settled the crown upon the House of Hanover; and even with every precaution, a large body of the Tories, called by the ministry the Whimsicals, had separated from their standard, and avowed their alarms for the security of the Protestant succession. On the other hand, the Elector of Hanover had no confidence in the promises of the Tory administration. Looking upon the Whigs as the firm friends of the act of settlement, and warned by the Duke of Marlborough against the intentions of their opponents, he seemed determined to rely solely upon that party, and to use the first moment of his power to place the helm in their hands. This prospect of course augmented the numbers of the Whigs, and brought many of the selfish and the venal to the ranks of the minority. Thus the ministry, however triumphant for the present, found their future prospects clouded on every side: indeed so embarrassing was their situation, that it was extremely difficult for them to choose any part that could lead to final and permanent success. If they openly and zealously supported

the succession of the House of Hanover, they might lose the Queen's favour without any certainty of gaining that of the Elector; if they favoured the Pretender, they exposed themselves without any safe retreat to the risk of being condemned as traitors and conspirators.

To aggravate all these difficulties, the government was conducted by two men, who agreed in nothing but their dislike and treachery to one another. Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, was so long an object of bitter enmity to the Whigs, that it would be unjust to take his character from their partisans. But we may safely consult upon this subject, the memoirs and writings of the Tories. For if there are none more liable to err than party men in the estimate of the character of their opponents, none are better qualified to judge of the merits of their own leaders. The intercourse of party brings so many of the chief qualities of the mind and heart into play, requires so much decision, firmness, promptitude, good faith, honesty, and resolution, that no man can long be a leader, without making himself thoroughly known to all the more sagacious among his followers. By the declaration then, of his own party, Harley was a man peculiary unfit to guide in a moment of crisis; he was dilatory and insincere, always seemingly full of business, yet as constantly delaying to resolve till it was too late, and then excusing himself to his colleagues and his sovereign by false pretences. His chief merits were a talent for intrigue, and a capacity for speaking and leading in parliament, when he applied himself to it in earnest; but his extreme indolence, joined to a great share of good humour, made him think too lightly, and act too feebly for the difficult times in which he was placed. While he fancied that he

could cajole mankind by his address, his perpetual intrigues with the heads of all parties to gain support for the day, deprived him of many of his zealous friends, and the close reserve of his manner, contrasted with the honest frankness of Somers, contributed still further to alienate affection and confirm suspicion.* Even his love of literature and men of wit, which would have been a virtue in a more tranquil age, was a defect in him. He employed hours that should have been devoted to active exertion, in penning rhymes and patronizing poets. It is curious that Walpole, his successor, has been blamed, and with equal justice, for the opposite quality. For the same patronage of letters, which was a defect in the latter days of Queen Anne, would have been graceful in the reign of George the Second.

St. John was a man of a very different kind. Admitted into office in the post of secretary of war, when he was little more than thirty years of age,† he had every kind of brilliant advantage; a handsome person, quick apprehension, wit, learning, and taste; he was the best orator in the House of Commons, an admirable writer, superior to Swift, Pope, and Arbuthnot in conversation, good tempered, and a despiser of money. With these qualities, it is no wonder if his self-conceit

* Swift. Enquiry into the behaviour of the Queen's last ministry.

† In 1704, two years or less after he came into parliament. There seems to have been some misunderstanding with respect to the age of Lord Bolingbroke; Lord Chesterfield says he was Secretary of War when only twenty-four, and Swift speaks of him as littlemore than thirty when he was Secretary of State; but by his epitaph inserted in Mallet's life, it appears that he was born in 1672, and consequently was thirty-two when he obtained his first office, and thirty-eight when he was appointed to the second. Did he from vanity, like a pretty woman, conceal his true age?

was great, and his pretensions boundless. But unfortunately for him, with all his parts, he wanted steadiness of purpose, and honesty of design; he was a rake acting the part of a high-churchman, an intriguer in the garb of a patriot, an unprincipled genius, assuming the opinions of a sincere bigot. Let it be added to this, that St. John had no strong moral feeling; he seemed to seek the gratification of his vanity more than the attainment of his country's good, or even than the satisfaction of a lofty ambition. His chief aim was to have the reputation of being at once the best man of business, and the first man of pleasure in the kingdom; his excesses in wine and love were as notorious as his speeches or his negotiations, and his favourite model was Alcibiades, the most unprincipled of the great men of antiquity.* Hence it happened that he never long possessed the confidence and obedience of his party. For it is the character of party, especially in England, to ask for the assistance of a man of talent, but to follow the guidance of a man of character.

Two men so differently formed were made to differ, and it was not long before they did so. They had risen by supplanting their friends, and they felt the distrust they were fitted to inspire. Harley, like an owl in the day time, or a mole above ground, hastened back from the broad light in which his station placed him, to the darkness and concealment of private intrigue. St. John had not been many months in office, before he complained that the Queen was cold, and his colleague an enemy.† His rash activity and heedless vanity,

* Swift. Enquiry into the behaviour of the Queen's last ministry.

† Swift's Letters, 1711. Bolingbroke's correspondence, May, 18, 1711. "We who are reputed to be in his intimacy have few opportunities of seeing him,

were perpetually stumbling against the supine indolence, and suspicious reserve of the Treasurer.

Many little circumstances contributed to increase the enmity between the two ministers. A newspaper writer affirmed that Guiscard, who stabbed Harley at the council board, intended to wound the Secretary instead of the Treasurer, and the insinuation was attributed to the conceit and jealousy of St. John. When St. John was made a peer, he wished to obtain an earldom lately extinct in a branch of his family, but the Queen would not consent to his being more than a viscount, and the Secretary assigned her refusal to the malice of Harley.* From this time they were never cordial together; and had it not been that St. John's knowledge of the French language made him necessary to the ministry, in the negotiations for peace, Harley and Mrs. Masham would have forced him to resign his office.

The most anxious of all their cares, however, lay in the preparation of means of safety for a future reign. About an hundred country gentlemen, associated under the name of the October club, insisted on the dismissal of all the Whigs, severe punishment of the former ministers, and such a thorough establishment of the Tory party, as might make them formidable to any successor whatever. St. John seems to have been inclined to adopt their notions.† But the Queen was

" and none of talking freely with him. As he is the only true channel, through " which the Queen's pleasure is conveyed; so there is and must be a perfect stag- " nation till he is pleased to open himself and set the water flowing."

* Swift's Enquiry. Bolingbroke in his letter to Wyndham, says, " I was " dragged into the House of Lords in such a manner as to make my promotion a " punishment, not a reward." p. 31. See likewise his correspondence.

† See his Correspondence, vol. i. Swift, Journal to Stella.

by no means willing to go the lengths they desired. She had been so long, and so carefully taught that she was a tool in the hands of the Whigs, that she resolved for the future not to put herself in the hands of any party whatever; and in the words of Swift, in order not to be directed, she would not allow herself to be advised. The future safety of the Tory party, and even the choice of a successor, were indifferent to her in comparison to the maintenance of her own fullness of power, and like many other sovereigns, she fancied that by giving hopes to every party and complete sway to none, she should reign supreme over all. Thus the lessons of the Tories were turned against themselves; and it was found that in Queen Anne, as in many other persons, great weakness of mind was compatible with unconquerable obstinacy. It happened likewise unluckily for the ministers, that the notions and habits of the Queen fell in with the prevailing foibles of Lord Oxford. He also aimed at securing himself, not so much by establishing the dominion of one party, as by making friends with all; vainly imagining that the Whigs, if not driven to despair, would respect his moderation and forgive his treachery. And as the principal fault of his mind was delay; so it happened that delay was the principal weapon by which the Queen warded off the importunities of the persons about her. Thus Harley was dilatory by nature, and the Queen by design: while on the other hand the Queen was irresolute by constitution, and Harley upon system. Hence the affairs of the state dragged slowly on, and the prime minister bearing the blame at once of his own faults and those of his mistress, was accused of treachery by numbers of his party, of unsteadiness by his dearest friends, of incapacity by all. Let us now see the

effects produced by this situation of the court and country upon public events.

The work of the peace was accomplished by the ministers in the face of a strong opposition in parliament, who were assisted by the influence and authority of all the allies. To increase this difficulty, the Queen appeared lukewarm in the support of her servants; and it was remarked, that being present in the House of Lords on the day a motion was made by Lord Nottingham against any peace while Spain continued in the hands of the Bourbon family, she chose to be led out by the Duke of Somerset, who had spoken strongly for the motion, in preference to her own chamberlains.* When the treaties were concluded, that part of them which related to commerce, excited a violent opposition. The ministers had stipulated that all the goods and commodities of France, should be received on the footing of the most favoured nations, a stipulation which was loudly complained of by the manufacturers of wool and silk, more particularly the former. Various arguments were employed to shew that labour being cheaper, and the currency debased in France, she could afford to sell her manufactures at a cheaper rate than the English.†

The erroneous notions which prevailed in those days respecting the balance of trade, were turned to great account on

* Swift. Enquiry, &c.

† It is curious enough that about a century afterwards reasons were employed to shew that our commerce and our manufactures suffered because our currency was debased, and that of other countries was not. But the one argument is as groundless as the other. If the currency is debased twenty per cent. in A., the money price of the goods of A, will exchange for a nominal twenty per cent. less than before in the country B, but when that money returns to A, it will again be converted into a nominal twenty per cent. more than before. So that all things remain equal.

this question. It was said that in the days of Charles the Second, before the prohibitory duties were imposed, we lost a million a year by the excess of the imports over the exports; while on the other hand, the trade with Portugal yielded five or six hundred thousand pounds yearly in bullion. This view was grounded upon a common, but very strange error. Because men had taken gold and silver as the most convenient medium of exchange, they came to believe that these two metals were the only substances which properly constituted wealth! As if he who possesses flocks, and herds, and houses, and clothes, were not as rich as he who possesses a heap of bullion! What is no less strange, this error sprang up, and was fostered among merchants, the practical men who made their fortunes by the art whose principles they did not understand. So powerful was it at this time, that Sir Charles Cooke, Sir Theodore Janssen, and others of the first merchants of London, published a periodical paper, in which they asserted that a free commerce with France would be a greater calamity than the fire of London; that country gentlemen would find their rents decay, and the common people be obliged either to starve, or to emigrate.* This absurd doctrine was supported by so many petitions, and the forces of the Whigs were aided on this occasion by so many of the Tories, that a bill to carry the articles of the treaty of commerce into effect was rejected by a majority of nine voices. But Sir Thomas Hanmer, who had moved the rejection of the bill, a few days afterwards proposed and carried an address to the Crown, thanking the Queen for the great care she had taken of the honour and

Commercial Treaty.

June, 1713.

* See Tindal, 8vo. v. 6, p. 82.

security of the kingdom in the treaty of peace, and likewise for having laid so good a foundation for the interest of her people in trade, but praying at the same time that she would appoint commissioners to explain and perfect those articles which related to commerce. The Queen, in her answer, took this address in the sense of an approbation of all the treaties, and the opposition, by a manœuvre which is not uncommon, thus found their victory explained away by those who had helped to gain it. Notwithstanding the vote of the Commons, however, the general sense of the nation was strongly against the treaties of commerce, and the peace, falling into disrepute, helped to destroy the ministry who had made it. "The very work which ought to have been the basis of our strength," says Bolingbroke, "was in part demolished before our eyes, and we were stoned with the ruins of it. Whilst this was doing, Oxford looked on as if he had not been a party to all which had passed; broke now and then a jest which savoured of the inns of court, and the bad company in which he had been bred: and on those occasions where his station obliged him to speak of business, was absolutely unintelligible."*

Let us now consider this matter of the treaty of commerce without the party considerations, which at that time were the chief cause of the interest it produced. There can be nothing more evidently absurd, it must be allowed, than the pretension to produce every commodity in every country; and to require the protection of restrictive laws for every article of produce or manufacture against foreign competition. Were such demands to be always listened to, there would hardly be such a thing as commerce in the world, and nations would

* Letter to Sir W. W. p. 51.

be consuming bad articles at a dear price, in order to favour some one class among themselves. As reasonable would it be for a country gentleman to say he would have his coat, shoes, and hat, made at home by his own labourers, when it is evident that they could not be so well made, and his men might be much better employed.

The first rule then, on this subject, is to allow a general freedom of commerce. But to this rule several exceptions are to be made. When the production or manufacture of a particular article is necessary to the strength or greatness of a country, economical reasons must yield to political, and some wealth must be sacrificed for security and independence. Or, when a particular branch of industry has been greatly favoured by the law, the protection which has been given must be taken away very gradually, lest the people employed in it should suddenly be reduced to want and famine.

If we apply these principles to the commercial treaty of which we are speaking, it will be seen that on general grounds, the opposers of the treaty had little reason on their side. Besides, the stipulations were not that French goods should be admitted duty free; but that the goods of each country should reciprocally be received on the footing of the most favoured nations. The allegations of the petitioners that labour was cheap, and money depreciated in France, deserve little attention. Experience shews that cheapness of labour may be counteracted by skill and activity.

Other considerations intervened on the subject of the Portuguese wines. We had a special treaty with Portugal of the year 1702, called the Methuen treaty, by which we agreed to

receive the wines of Portugal for a third less duty than those of France, provided the Portuguese admitted our woollens. Sir William Wyndham alledged that our woollens would be admitted at all events, whether they were provided for by treaty or not, and this is very probably the truth. In any case it seems a very awkward mode of forwarding commerce, to restrain the taste of a nation in wine, and debar it from some of the most delicious productions in the whole world, for the purpose of improving the sale of woollen goods . Indeed it is certain that if the wines of all countries had been placed on an equal footing, a demand for our manufactures would have been found somewhere fully equal to the consumption of wine. Laying all these objections aside, however, some political reasons might be alledged against the commercial treaty with France. On the breaking out of a war there is no greater inconvenience to a nation, at a time when she wants all her resources, than the loss of a great branch of her commerce; and experience as well as reason teaches us that of all wars the most frequent, and the most formidable to England, are those in which she is engaged with France. The same argument may be urged in support of the Methuen treaty with Portugal. I confess that this view, if not conclusive, appears to me to be deserving of the utmost attention.

In the times of which we are treating, however, the commercial interests, and even the foreign policy of the country were overlooked in the great struggle between two rival principles of domestic government. Upon the occasion of the treaty of commerce, the Whigs repaid their opponents for the unjust stigma which had been fixed upon them by the cry of the church in danger. " I doubt," says Swift, " my

friends the rabble are at least grown trimmers, and that setting up the cry of trade and wool, against Sacheverel and the church, hath cooled their zeal."*

Jacobite intrigues.

The intrigues of the Jacobites during this important period, were extremely active, though far from being equally successful. The change of ministry in 1710 quickened all their energy, and they fondly anticipated that the affection of the Queen for her brother, and the despair of the Tories of ever gaining favour at the court of Hanover, would make a change in the succession an easy and popular measure. But the irresolution and prudence of Anne, the timidity and conciliatory policy of Harley, together with the real Protestant feelings of both, defeated all the designs of the Stuart faction. Yet they were lured on with an appearance of favour, both by the Queen and the ministry. The Duke of Berwick informs us, that towards the end of 1710, the Abbé Gaultier, who was charged with the secret negotiation between France and England, came to him at St. Germain on the part of the Earl of Oxford. After speaking of the designs of that minister in favour of the Chevalier, he insisted on three conditions, 1st, that no one at St. Germain, not even the Queen Mother, should be informed of the affair; 2nd, that Queen Anne should enjoy the crown during her life; 3rd, that securities should be given for the preservation of the church of England, and of the liberties of the kingdom. To all this Berwick willingly consented, and obtained the sanction of the Pretender; but when he wished to enter into detail, Gaultier told him it was necessary the peace should be made before so delicate an enterprize could be entered upon. After this

* Swift to Bolingbroke. Aug. 7, 1714.

artful overture, Monsieur Menager was sent by the court of France to London, to obtain some favour for the Pretender in the negotiations for the peace of Utrecht. He proposed that a secret article should be introduced to release the King of France from the obligations of the engagement, in favour of the House of Hanover, to be contained in the public treaty. St. John said he was afraid the Queen would not put her name to such a document, but he thought she would declare, by word of mouth, that the obligation on the King of France should cease whenever she should disengage him from it. Having conceded thus much, St. John introduced Menager to Mrs. Masham, saying that he himself did not choose to meddle further in this matter. Mrs. Masham, however, was much more bold, and more open; she owned, "that it was "the present unhappiness of the Queen to possess the throne "of her brother, which the political measures of the state had "made legal, and in some sort necessary; that, however she "believed, it gave her Majesty oftentimes secret uneasiness: "that this was not all the misfortune, but that she was obliged, "by the same necessity of state, not only against her disposi- "tion, but even against her principles, to further and promote "the continuance of the usurpation, not only beyond her own "life, but for ever." She confessed that the Hanover succession was "all their aversions," but said, that the rage of the common people against the Chevalier had grown to such a height that the Queen could not sign any treaty of peace without the strongest engagement possible for confirming that succession. It was agreed therefore between them, 1st, That the King of France should be required, in the treaty of peace, to abandon the Pretender and his interests. 2nd, That

such a stipulation should not be considered as binding.* With this proof of the sincerity of the monarchs of France and England in his hands, Menager repaired to Utrecht, but when he reached that place, he found that the interests of the Pretender had been made the subject of a separate negotiation between the agents of the court of St. Germain, and the English ministry.

The object of Harley in these intrigues, was to secure the support of the Jacobites in parliament, in favour of his administration and the peace. Accordingly, the Pretender gave orders to all his friends to vote with the minister, an accession of strength which greatly facilitated the peace, and helped to maintain the ministry in their places.† And although the Jacobite agents soon began to suspect that Harley was not sincere in their cause, and warned their master against him, yet they found they could do nothing better than continue their support, for the Whigs were their decided enemies, and Oxford appeared to them to be complete master of the Queen's mind.‡ Some among them, indeed, advised the Pretender not to do any thing to forward the peace; and Plunkett, one of their principal leaders, as far as it is possible to understand his obscure plotting, seems to have gained the confidence of the Imperial court, and the Whig party, for the purpose not only of betraying their designs to the Jacobites and the ministers, but likewise with a view of thwarting the peace.‖ This indeed was the true policy of the Pretender; the continuance of the war to the Queen's death could alone have given him a chance of foreign support, and it is one of

* Macpherson, Stuart Papers, v. 2, p. 288-9. † Mémoires de Berwick.
‡ Stuart Papers, p. 297. ‖ Stuart Papers, 1712, 1713, v. 2.

the many instances of the vanity of human policy, that the peace was forwarded by the Pretender, whose cause it ruined, and opposed by the Whigs, who by it were enabled to secure their grand object, the succession of the House of Hanover to the throne of England.

The Queen, after this, continued her wavering and ambiguous conduct; giving hopes by her language of conditional support, while she took no measures to give effect to her wishes. Speaking to the Duke of Buckingham of the Pretender, she said, "You see he does not take the least step to "oblige me. I have no reason to think he values me or my "kingdom, therefore I shall give it to the Elector of Ha- "nover." Once when he was pressing her, she replied warmly, "What would you have me do? You know, as the "law stands, a Papist cannot inherit the crown, and therefore, "any will I may make will be to no purpose; the law gives "all to Hanover; and therefore I had better do that with a "good grace which I cannot help. He may thank himself "for it. He knows I always loved him better than the "Elector."*

By these and other speeches, she endeavoured to prevail on her brother to abandon the Roman Catholic church, and declare himself a Protestant. Many of his friends in England gave the same advice; and some, if not most of the Tory members of the House of Commons, in their conversation with the Jacobite agents, professed, that if he would but acknowledge his conversion to the Protestant faith, they would eagerly avail themselves of the opportunity to settle the crown upon his head. The cry against him among the

* Stuart papers, July 1712, v. 2. p. 327.

people was entirely founded upon his religion, and there seemed every reason to hope, that with the change of faith, their opinion might in a short time also be changed. Thus the Queen, the proprietors of the land, and the people seemed ready to bestow upon him the crown of the three kingdoms, upon his simple renunciation of one form of christianity to embrace another. Nay, many of his immediate partizans, and even some of his Protestant followers, with a casuistry worthy of the Jesuits, said it would be quite sufficient to lay aside the exercise and profession of his religion for a time, with the power of resuming it when he should be safely established on the throne.

But at the same time, others of his counsellors advised him to beware how he committed such an error. A conversion so obviously effected for interested purposes, they said, could inspire no confidence, and would hurt his character without forwarding his cause. The church of England, they argued, ought to be satisfied with a promise of security for her rights and privileges, and an assurance that the difference of religion should make no alteration in the political conduct of the sovereign. When the example of Charles II. was urged in favour of dissimulation, they replied that in this case there could be no concealment; the Chevalier had been educated in the Roman Catholic religion; his renunciation of it must be as public and solemn, as it would be hollow and hypocritical; destructive to his own peace of mind without being satisfactory to the world.

In these latter reasons the Pretender acquiesced, and I confess I think his decision does him honour. A person who is indifferent to religion may change his outward faith without

much diminution of his honesty, but he who is thoroughly persuaded of the doctrines of his belief, ought not to renounce them for any worldly interest. Any sacrifice of state policy may be complied with, out of respect to the opinions of others, but a change of profession on the most important of all subjects, cannot be made by a sincere believer in his faith, without a conscious postponement of his eternal welfare to his temporal advantage. And mankind will naturally argue, that he who would sell his soul for a great interest, will forfeit his word and honour for a small one.*

Upon the whole, the intrigues carried on in England during these years, although they furnish a most voluminous correspondence, display no regular or extensive plan of operations. With the exception of the Duke of Buckingham, and latterly the Duke of Ormond, the Jacobites seem to have engaged scarcely any persons of weight, rank, or character in their interests. The Tory gentlemen hardly went further than saying that they should be happy to see the Pretender restored *if* he would become a Protestant, and that they would willingly do something for him *if* he would first change his conduct, and dismiss his advisers. In the end, they all sheltered themselves under the necessity of obeying the law, unless repealed by parliament. The truth is, they were ready to submit to either claimant, but not to risk themselves for any.

The Duke of Marlborough alone, among the nobility, acted with that duplicity of political conduct which forms so strong a contrast to the brilliancy of his military career. On the 13th of June, 1710, he opened a correspondence with the

* See a Letter from the Pretender. Macpherson, v. 2, p. 525.

Duke of Berwick, concerning the interests of the Pretender, and appeared extremely anxious for his succession. On the 30th of August, of the same year, he wrote to the Elector of Hanover that the views of the new ministry tended to "over-" turn the Protestant succession, and with it the safety and " liberty of their country, and of all Europe."*

In Scotland, the Jacobites made a display of their opinions, but with little advantage to their cause. In 1711, the Duchess of Gordon, a Roman Catholic, sent a medal with the Pretender's head upon it, and the legend "*Reddite*" to the faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh, who voted thanks to her at a meeting of their body. Mr. Dundas of Arnistoun, who was charged with the message, made an harangue, in which he thanked the Duchess for sending them a medal of their Sovereign Lord the King, and hoped she would soon be able to send them another upon his restoration, and the finishing of usurpation, rebellion, and whiggery. Scarcely any notice was at first taken of this affair, but upon the complaint of the Hanoverian envoy, the Lord Advocate, who happened to be a Whig, was dismissed from his office for neglecting to prosecute; the offenders were left unmolested. In 1713, two addresses were presented to the Queen from the burghs of Inverness and Nairn, evidently favouring the Pretender. The first of these speaks thus: " We without reserve depend on your Majesty's wisdom in securing our religion, and the succession to the hereditary crown of Great Britain, in the family of your royal progenitors, the most ancient line of succession in the world." The person who presented these

Jacobites in Scotland 1711.

* Macpherson, Stuart and Hanover Papers, 1710.

addresses was introduced by the Earl of Mar, who afterwards headed the rebellion of 1715.

The Whigs. While the ministry were divided, and the Jacobites feeble, the Whigs grew every day in strength and confidence. They had the advantage of having one sole purpose upon which their hearts were set; a purpose too favoured by the law, and which could be avowed, nay even boasted of, in public. To procure this object, were combined the wisdom and experience of Somers, the temper and moderation of Halifax, the active genius of Sunderland, and the ready wit of Wharton; their deliberations were constant, their zeal unremitting, their union firm. While Harley was alternately making advances to the Pretender, and sending embassies to Hanover, the Whig leaders were in perpetual communication with the Hanoverian envoy, busy in suggesting measures for the further security of the succession. No wonder, therefore, if the Tory ministry were at Hanover considered as decided Jacobites, who waited only for an opportunity to restore the Pretender to his hereditary throne. Indeed so persuaded were the Whig leaders of this intention, that they eagerly pressed the Electress Sophia to send her grandson to England at the head of a body of troops. But the phlegmatic caution of the German court tempered the imprudent zeal of English party; the Hanoverian statesmen represented that so violent and hostile a measure would oblige the greater part of the people of England to rally round the throne of Anne, whom they still loved, and would not bear to see insulted; while at the same time, the Electoral Prince himself had a decided repugnance to taking up arms in defiance of

the Queen of England. Indeed it would appear that the Electoral family were not so anxious as might have been expected, to reap the brilliant succession that awaited them; the Electress Sophia had compunctions on the ground of hereditary right, and her son, afterwards George the First, was sometimes so vexed by the intrigues and animosities of the English parties, that he almost determined to remain among his quiet subjects of Germany.

Dissolution of Parliament. 1713.

Such was the state of affairs at the time of the dissolution of parliament in the year 1713. The elections were carried in four places out of five in favour of the Tories; yet Harley was accused of indolence and indifference, and the Jacobite agents represented him to their master as appointing Whig sheriffs for the purpose of influencing the elections in favour of that party; a senseless and ignorant imputation. In the winter of 1713, the Queen was seized with a dangerous illness at Windsor, which excited great alarms, and universal expectation. For some time the malady, supposed at first to be gout in the stomach, refused to yield to the remedies prescribed; at length, however, the Queen was relieved and restored to apparent health. Oxford, who remarked the anxiety and trepidation of the persons about her, said to Swift, "These people, when the Queen is ill, think "she has not an hour to live, and when she is better, they "act as if she were immortal."* The sarcasm was thought applicable by many to the conduct of the Lord Treasurer himself.

Queen's Illness.

This illness of the Queen served ultimately to dishearten the new converts of the Jacobite party, not yet prepared for

* Swift, Enquiry.

action, and to infuse new strength into the Whigs. But its immediate effect was to spread a great panic in the city; a run was made upon the bank; it was reported that an armament was prepared in the ports of France to bring over the Pretender, and the funds rapidly fell. To quiet these alarms, the Queen, by the advice of her ministers, wrote a letter to the Lord Mayor, informing him that although an aguish indisposition succeeded by a fit of the gout, had detained her at Windsor longer than she designed, yet she intended soon to return to her usual place of residence, and to open the session of parliament on the 16th of February, the day originally fixed. This letter, together with the contradiction of the report concerning the French armament, and the assurance that the Pretender was still in Lorraine, restored the fund-holders to their former peace of mind.

Meeting of Parliament. Feb. 16, 1714.

On the 16th of February, accordingly, the parliament met. Sir Thomas Hanmer, the same person who had so strenuously opposed the treaty of commerce in the last parliament, was chosen Speaker. Mr. Steele mentioning this circumstance in support of the motion, said, "I rise up to do him honour," on which many members who had before tried to interrupt him, called out, "Tatler, Tatler," and as he went down the house, several said, "It is not so easy a thing to speak in the "house; he fancies, because he can scribble,"* &c.; slight circumstances indeed, but which shew at once the indisposition of the house to the Whig party, and the natural envy of mankind, long ago remarked by Cicero, towards all who attempt to obtain more than one kind of pre-eminence.

* Steele's Apology.

The Queen, in her speech from the throne, expressed to the two houses her joy at having obtained an honourable and advantageous peace for her own people, together with the greater part of her allies, and her hope that her interposition might prove effectual to complete the settlement of Europe. She remarked that some persons had been so malicious as to insinuate that the Protestant succession in the house of Hanover was in danger under her government, but that those who endeavoured to distract the minds of men with imaginary dangers could only mean to disturb the public tranquillity. After all she had done to secure the religion and liberties of her people, she could not mention such proceedings without some degree of warmth, and she hoped her parliament would agree with her, that attempts to weaken her authority could never be the proper means to strengthen the Protestant succession.

Pamphlets of Swift and Steele.

One of the first subjects of deliberation for the parliament, was a pamphlet written by Dr. Swift. From the commencement of their administration, the Tories had shewn an excessive sensibility to the attacks made upon them in pamphlets, newspapers, and loose sheets which issued from Grub Street, at the price of a penny a piece. They had not been long in office before they meditated the suppression of this last kind of warfare,* and they accordingly laid a tax of a halfpenny on these cheap productions. But they failed in their object of suppression, for Swift complains, that while the Tories were discouraged by the additional price, the Whig papers continued to flourish under all disadvantages; a proof of the superior wealth, popularity, or wit of the opposition.

* Swift, Diary, January 31, 1711.

The paper war had raged of late more than ever: the Whigs had several good writers, with Steele at their head, who wrote in their behalf; the ministers employed the pens of Arbuthnot and Swift to defend their measures, and ridicule their opponents. Arbuthnot was a zealous and consistent Tory; Swift had been originally a friend of Addison and Steele; and during the Whig administration, followed their opinions, though perhaps without much concerning himself in political disputes. But he was deeply mortified and provoked at finding his merits overlooked in the preferments of his patrons; Lord Somers, whose favour he sought, either meeting with superior claims on his attention, or not considering Swift a fit subject for ecclesiastical honours, neglected his pretensions, and Swift longed for revenge. It so happened that at the time of the change of ministry, he was in London, charged by the bishops of Ireland with some business concerning the first fruits: Harley treated him with attention, St. John loaded him with flattery, and full of schemes of vengeance for the past, and hopes of fortune for the future, one of the ablest writers in the English language devoted his labour and his wit to the service of the new administration. Such are the accidents which not only give colour to the lives of authors, but often change the fate of states and empires.

At this time, Steele had written an able pamphlet, called the Crisis, sounding the alarm on the dangers of the Protestant succession; Swift had come forth on the other side in a piece called, "The public spirit of the Whigs, shewn in their "generous encouragement of the author of the Crisis." This last production was voted a scandalous libel by the House of Lords, and the printers were ordered into custody; but

refusing to answer any questions which might criminate themselves, and a minister having declared they should be prosecuted, they were discharged, and the Queen was requested to offer a reward for the apprehension of the author. Three hundred pounds were accordingly offered; but Swift, far from being discovered and punished, secretly received an hundred pounds from the Lord Treasurer for his performance. Had this fact been known, it would have borne out an addition, proposed to the address of the Lords, implying that the pamphlet was the more dangerous, as the author pretended to be in the secrets of administration. Marlborough, Sunderland, and all the chief Whigs, signed a protest, on the rejection of this addition.

In the mean time the House of Commons had been more severe with the author of the Crisis. Steele was attacked by name for that and other pieces, and readily confessed in his place that he was the author. A day was appointed for hearing him; public expectation was excited, and when the time arrived, he spoke in his own defence for three hours with great ability. Mr. Walpole, afterwards the celebrated minister, made a speech of great force in his behalf; "Why "is the author answerable in Parliament," he said, "for a "book which he wrote in his private capacity? And if he is "punishable by law, why is he not left to the law? By this "mode of proceeding, parliament, which used to be the "scourge only of evil ministers, is made by ministers, the "scourge of the subject." Coming afterwards to the main subject of the work, he asked "From what fatality does it "arise that what is written in favour of the Protestant suc-"cession, and what was countenanced by the late ministry,

March 18th, 1714.

" is deemed a libel by the present administration? General " invectives in the pulpit against any particular sin, have " never been deemed a reflection on individuals, unless the " darling sin of those persons happen to be the vice against " which the preacher inveighs. It becomes then a fair infer- " ence, from the irritability and resentment of the present " administration against its defender, that their darling sin is " to obstruct and prevent the Protestant Succession."* Continuing in this strain, he stated, that " a book had been " mentioned by Mr. Steele, written on the subject of here- " ditary right; in that book the hereditary right to the " throne of England was strongly asserted; in that book " the will of Henry the Eighth had been published at length, " as if it were a model for imitation; the quotations were " made from the Harleian Library, and it was a fact, which " he defied the Secretary to the Treasury to contradict, " that twelve or fourteen pounds had been paid by the Lord " Treasurer, to the person who had discovered that will " of Henry the Eighth." Mr. Lowndes, the Secretary to the Treasury, did not deny the fact, but said the will might be seen in Westminster Abbey. A circumstance of some interest occurred during this debate. Steele had published a paper in the Guardian, warmly defending Lady Charlotte Finch, afterwards Duchess of Somerset, from an attack upon her in the Examiner, on the ground of alleged misbehaviour at Church. Remembering this obligation, Lord Finch her brother rose to speak in behalf of Steele. Embarrassed by the novelty of his situation, he hesitated, and was obliged to stop; but as he sate down, he said loud enough to be heard, " It is

* Coxe's Walpole, v. i. p. 72.

" strange, I cannot speak for this man, though I could readily " fight for him." These words made such an impression upon that admirable audience, that cries of hear him! hear him! resounded from all parts of the house, and singular to say, Lord Finch rising again, made a speech which flowing from a warm and noble heart, was so remarkable for magnanimity of spirit and clearness of expression, that his very adversaries received him as one whom they would wish their friend. Speaking of Steele's language respecting the peace, " we may if we " please" he said, " call it here honourable, but I am sure it " is accounted scandalous in Holland, Germany, Portugal, " and over all Europe, except France and Spain. We may " call it advantageous, but all the trading part of the nation " find it to be otherwise: And if it be really advantageous, " it must be to the ministry that made it." Sir W. Wyndham here rose, and said the ministry would not say the peace was advantageous to them. On which Lord Finch quickly replied, " then it was plain it was advantageous to no one but " our late enemies." I have dwelt upon this little circumstance the longer, because it affords a good sample both of the manner in which speaking is not only cherished, but almost created as it were by the applause of the hearers, and likewise of the admirable fairness of the English House of Commons towards a political adversary. Modesty in the speakers and candour in the hearers, go far towards forming a stile of eloquence at once impassioned and chastened; while, on the contrary, impudence in the speaker and injustice in the audience, produce lame declamation and extravagant hyperbole.

At the end of the debate, the papers in question were voted

scandalous and seditious libels, and Mr. Steele was expelled the house. It afterwards appeared, singularly enough, that the Crisis was sketched, if not entirely composed, by Mr. Moore, a barrister; that it was corrected by the chief members of the Whig party; and that at a meeting of the party assembled for the purpose of writing a defence for Steele, Walpole had made a speech, in which he suggested all the topics used by Steele in the House of Commons. Thus no part of the work was Steele's, except the glory and the punishment.

If we now weigh in cool blood the proceedings of the Parliament upon this occasion, we shall see little reason to applaud their conduct either to Swift or to Steele. Generally speaking, there are no worse judges of what is or is not libel, than large deliberative assemblies; they are naturally prone to affix that appellation upon any book strongly written against the sentiments of the majority. In the two cases before us, nothing like an offence against the privileges of Parliament was even pretended, nor was any legal authority called in question. In the case of Swift, the condemnation was procured by the animosity of the Whig lords calling to their assistance the pride of the peers of Scotland. One of the parts which gave most offence, was a passage, where accounting for the propositions for a Union towards the end of the reign of King William, the writer said they arose "because "Scotland had not settled their crown upon the house of "Hanover, but left themselves at large in hopes to make "their advantage; and it was thought highly dangerous to "leave that part of the island, inhabited by a poor fierce northern people, at liberty to put themselves under a different

"king." The pamphlet of Steele, which gave such offence to the House of Commons, is written in language still more remote from libel. Indeed it would not be easy to extract any thing libellous or improperly violent, from either of the two books. It must be confessed, however, that the Lords acted with more temper than the Commons, as they only addressed the Queen for the purpose of discovering the author; whereas the Commons proceeded to punishment, and expelled their member for a work which may have been reckoned a service by the people, whom he was sent to represent. But the less the houses of Parliament meddle with the press, unless their freedom of debate or of vote is directly threatened, the better for liberty, and their own real dignity.

March 17. Residence of the Pretender in Lorraine.

The next business in parliament, was a debate in the House of Lords, on the danger arising to the Protestant succession from the Pretender's remaining in Lorraine, and an address was ordered, praying for an account of what steps had been taken, and what answers had been received on that subject. While the Whig peers were thus sounding the alarm on the succession, Lord Oxford endeavoured to prevent the landing of the Electoral Prince of Hanover, with an armed force, by moving for a bill to make it high treason to bring foreign troops into the kingdom. But this stratagem availed him nothing: when called upon to explain his meaning, he was obliged to say that the bill was meant to apply to foreign troops, introduced by the Pretender only; and he was then told that the bill was unnecessary, for such troops, if foreigners, would be enemies, and if natives, rebels. The bill was allowed to drop.

April 5th.

On the 5th of April, the Lords taking into consideration

Danger of the Protestant succession.

the state of the nation, a question was moved by Lord Wharton, whether the Protestant succession were in danger under the present administration? The ministerial side insisted on altering the last words of the question, to "under her Ma-"jesty's administration?" In this amendment they prevailed, and after a long debate, the question itself was resolved in the negative, by a majority of 76 against 64. Sir William Dawes, who had lately been made Archbishop of York, and Lord Anglesea, a thorough Tory in principle, spoke and voted on this occasion against the ministry; they were followed by Lords Abingdon, Jersey, Ashburnham and Carteret, and by all the bench of bishops except three. Lord Anglesea went so far as to say that "as the honour of his sovereign, and the "good of his country were the rule of his actions, so he had "no respect of persons; and if he found himself imposed "upon, he durst pursue an evil minister from the Queen's "closet to the tower, and from the tower to the scaffold." In these times such phrases were not empty words, and Harley, the minister alluded to, must have been somewhat roused from his apathy, by so bold a denunciation.

April 15th.

On the fifteenth, a similar question was proposed in the Commons, and discussed in a committee of the whole house. Secretary Bromley endeavoured to prove the succession out of danger, but was answered with great spirit and effect by Mr. Walpole. Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Speaker, to the surprise of many, declared in an able speech, that so much had been said to prove the succession in danger, and so little on the other side, that he should vote against the ministry. In the end it was resolved by a majority of 256 against 208. 1st, That the Protestant succession was not in danger, and 2ndly,

that the Queen be desired to renew her instances for the removal of the Pretender from Lorraine. The report of these resolutions produced another and very animated debate.

Reward for apprehending the Pretender.

In the mean time, several motions had been made in the house of Lords. It had been agreed to address the Queen for the removal of the Pretender from Lorraine. Lord Wharton moved that the Queen should be desired to issue a proclamation, offering a reward for any who should apprehend the Pretender, dead or alive. When this barbarous address was reported from the committee, Lord North and Grey rose, and said, that such a proclamation could be interpreted in no other way than as an encouragement to assassination; that such a practice was repugnant to christianity, the law of nature, and the laws of all civilized nations; and moreover, inconsistent with the character of that august assembly, in a nation and government famed for lenity and clemency. Lord Trevor spoke on the same side, and upon his motion, the last words of the address were altered to "apprehend and bring the Pretender to justice, in case he "should land or attempt to land either in Great Britain or "Ireland," and the time of issuing the proclamation was left to the Queen's discretion.* These mitigations were adopted by a majority of no more than ten; a proof that the dangers of the Protestant succession had not only hardened the hearts of party men, but had led many indifferent persons, anxious only for the security of the church, to a forgetfulness of the

* The Journals of the House of Lords give the words, "in case he should land, &c." as part of the address reported by the committee. I have left the text as it stands on the authority of all the historians of the time, but I am aware some may consider the journals as a better guide than them all.

laws of humanity, and the precepts of the christian religion. The Queen, in her answer, spoke of groundless fears, and jealousies which *had been industriously promoted;* said she did not at that time see any occasion for such a proclamation, but whenever she should judge it necessary, she would give orders for having one issued. This answer caused a warm debate in the House of Lords. The ministerial peers moved to thank the Queen in terms similar to those she had used; a discussion took place on the words 'and industriously' applied to the fears and jealousies said by the Queen to be promoted. The debate lasted four hours, and on a division the ministry carried the question only by two proxies; the absence of the Duke of Rutland, who was at Newmarket with a proxy in his pocket, and of the Duke of Grafton, who had been sent for to attend his duchess, gave this scanty triumph to the minister. On this occasion, of sixteen bishops present, only two voted with the court.

Some other resolutions were passed in parliament at this time. An address to thank the Queen for the peace was carried, after warm debates in both houses, and by a majority of only thirteen in the Lords. Addresses were voted to the Queen to intercede for the Catalans, and received with civil but fruitless answers. Sir Patrick Lawless, who had served the Pretender, having come to England with a commission from Philip of Spain, strong resolutions were voted in the House of Lords against receiving, as minister from another country, or admitting to any office, civil or military, in our own, any person who had borne arms against the Queen, not included in the capitulation of Limerick.

It is supposed that the scheme of Bolingbroke, to overturn

the Treasurer and secure his party, in the event of the Queen's death, led to the schism bill, which was at this time brought into the House of Lords. This bill may, at all events, serve to shew the principles, the views, and the intentions of the Tory party, and thereby give a notion of what might have been expected from them, had they succeeded in keeping the government of the state in their own hands during the succeeding reign. The schism bill was introduced by Sir William Wyndham, one of the chief ornaments of their party. Its object was to prevent education by dissenters, in any way; and it went to prohibit them from keeping schools, even for their own children. The bill was warmly opposed in the Commons by Mr. Hampden, Mr. Walpole, Mr. Lechmere, Sir Peter King, and Sir Joseph Jekyll. Mr. Stanhope, in particular, said, with justice and liberality, that such a bill could only encourage foreign education, which he thought so great an evil that he would gladly consent to a law to allow the Papists to keep schools, instead of driving them abroad to imbibe foreign manners and foreign habits. In the House of Lords this bill met with still warmer opposition. Lord Halifax urged, "that the very bringing in of this bill was injurious to the Queen, and he could not believe that her Majesty would ever give her royal assent to such a law, after the solemn declaration she had made from the throne, that she would inviolably maintain the toleration, which this bill visibly struck at. That her Majesty made it the glory of her reign to follow the steps of Queen Elizabeth, who had not only entertained and protected the reformed Walloons, when they took sanctuary in her dominions from the Spanish inquisition, but had likewise allowed them the public exercise of their religion,

Schism Bill.

and caused a clause in their favour to be inserted in the act of uniformity. That, in this manner, that wise and glorious Queen had vastly increased the wealth of the realm, the Walloons having settled here the woollen manufactures, which are the best branch of the national trade. That the protection and encouragement which the late King William and Queen Mary, and her present Majesty, had given to the French refugees, had proved no less advantageous to Great Britain; and, therefore, it would be a piece of barbarity to make an act which should debar many French protestants of the means of subsisting, either by keeping public schools, or teaching in private families; especially considering their late hard usage, the government not having, for above three years past, paid them any part of the £15,000 per annum, allowed by parliament in the civil list, towards the maintenance of their ministers and poor. He concluded with recalling to mind the fatal consequences of persecuting the dissenters in the reign of king Charles the First, which kindled a furious unnatural civil war, and ended in the total overthrow of Church and State."

Lord Townshend likewise represented the ill effects of persecution in general. He said "he had lived a long time in Holland, and had observed that the wealth and strength of that great and powerful commonwealth lay in the number of its inhabitants: but at the same time he was thoroughly persuaded, that, if the States should cause the schools of any one sect, tolerated in the United Provinces, to be shut up, they would soon be as thin of people as Sweden or Spain, in the very places, which then swarmed with inhabitants."

Lord Cowper remarked, that in many country towns reading,

writing, and grammar schools were chiefly supported by the dissenters; not only for the instruction and benefit of their own children, but likewise of those of poor churchmen; so that the suppression of these schools would, in some places, suppress the reading of the holy scriptures.

To all this it was only answered, that the church was in danger from the growth of schismatics, and that the dissenters had made this bill necessary, by drawing the children of churchmen to their schools and academies, as a means of propagating their opinions. Such was the argument by which a bishop of London endeavoured to support a persecution, which the vigilance of his order ought to have rendered as unnecessary as it was odious. A clause was proposed to allow the dissenters to have schools for the children of their own persuasion, but Lord Bolingbroke and the Chancellor succeeded in rejecting it, upon a division. Some other clauses had better success, particularly one which allowed the dissenters to have school-mistresses to teach their children, and another, by which the conviction was to take place in the ordinary courts of justice, instead of by summary process before a magistrate, as at first proposed. The bill passed by a majority of 77 to 72, and the amendments were agreed to in the Commons by a majority of 168 to 98. Several bishops concurred in a protest against passing this bill.

Enlisting men for the Pretender.

While these discussions were going on in parliament the Jacobite emissaries were not idle, and Lord Wharton received information that two Irish officers, of the name of Kelly, were enlisting men for the Pretender, in London and Westminster. He immediately repaired to Chief Justice Parker with his evidence on this subject, and procured a warrant for apprehending the two offenders; both were taken, one of them

with a pass from Lord Middleton, Secretary of State to the Pretender, in his pocket. This event threw the nation into a ferment, and the Queen, unable to stem the torrent, issued a proclamation offering £5000. for apprehending the Pretender, in case he should land, or attempt to land, in England. It is said that Oxford was not privy to the intention of proposing in council this proclamation, and even declared that he should oppose such a step. However this may be, the Commons took up the affair with ardour, and promised, by an address, to aid the Queen with a reward of £100,000, to attain the object of the proclamation: a warmth of zeal with which her Majesty would willingly have dispensed! In the Lords, on the motion of Lord Nottingham, an address was voted, thanking the Queen for her proclamation, desiring that she would enter into a guaranty for the Protestant succession with the Emperor* and King of Prussia; that she would offer a reward for apprehending any person enlisting men for the Pretender, and that she would cause all papists and non-jurors to be disarmed. Lord Bolingbroke coming into the house just after this address had been voted, said there was a more effectual way than any that had been proposed to exclude the Pretender, and that was by a bill, making it high treason to enlist men in his service. Lord Halifax, and other lords in opposition, said that such a bill was needless, as the Pretender and his adherents were all guilty of high treason. They however permitted the bill to be brought in, and then pointing out that the greatest danger of all arose from the assistance of France, they succeeded in converting the measure into a law, making it high treason "to list, or be listed to serve any

* The Emperor about this time was engaged in a negotiation for marrying an Archduchess, his niece, to the Pretender. See Macpherson.

" foreign prince, state, or potentate, without a license under " the sign manual of her Majesty, her heirs, or successors." The act was to continue three years.

After this a debate took place on the trade with the Spanish colonies. By the treaty of peace the Queen had reserved to herself a fourth part of the assiento contract, and it was suspected that she had bestowed it on Lord Bolingbroke, Lady Masham, and Mr. Arthur Moore, a friend and agent of Lord Bolingbroke. The suspicions on this subject were quickened by the complaints of the merchants on the third, fifth, and eighth articles of the treaty of commerce with Spain, and the Lords, influenced by these murmurs, addressed the Queen to know who had advised her to sign the treaty. The Queen replied generally, that she understood the explanatory articles were not detrimental to the trade of her subjects, and had therefore permitted them to be ratified. This unsatisfactory answer led to an enquiry upon the part of the Lords, and Mr. Moore himself was examined at the bar. On the motion of Lord Anglesea it was resolved to thank the Queen for having given up the greater part of the assiento contract, and to pray that any other advantages vested in her, under the treaty, might be disposed of to the use of the public. The enquiry concerning Mr. Moore was not continued that night, and for a reason which will sound curiously in our ears, namely, that the house had already sate till nine in the evening. For in those days men of business rose early in the morning, and never imagined that midnight was the best hour for discussing the affairs of the nation. On the next day, July 9, the Queen came to the House of Peers, and put an end to the session. In her speech, the last she ever made from the

Treaty of Commerce with Spain.

Queen's Speech.

throne, she said, "My chief concern is to preserve to you, and to your posterity, our holy religion, and the liberty of my subjects, and to secure the present and future tranquillity of my kingdoms. But I must tell you plainly, that these desirable ends can never be attained unless you bring the same dispositions on your parts; unless all groundless jealousies, which create and foment divisions amongst you, be laid aside: and unless you shew the same regard for my just prerogative, and for the honour of my government, as I have always expressed for the rights of my people."

Result of the Session.

Upon the whole, the result of this session was to give confidence to the Whig party, and shake the tenure of the administration. A large body of the Tories, and nearly the whole bench of Bishops, had joined in many of the motions proceeding from the opposition, and so strong an excitement had been kept up in the country, that it was difficult for the Jacobites to prepare any measure for what they called the restoration, without producing a popular sally, which would have shattered and destroyed all that they had done. Let us now turn to the secret history of this period, for the explanation and developement of the events which have preceded, and those which are to follow the point of time at which we stand.

Divisions of the Tory party.

The Tory party of this period may be considered as divided into three separate bodies. The first consisted of Jacobites more or less declared, more or less attached to the cause of the Pretender. The second consisted of men divided in their affections between church and king; unwilling to hurt the church by admitting a Roman Catholic prince, but perhaps still more averse to appear in arms

against him, whom they considered as their lawful hereditary sovereign. The third body was composed of the friends of the established church, who combined Tory principles of government with a steadfast attachment to the Protestant succession.

Of these three bodies, it seems from all the evidence we can collect, that the first was the weakest, and the second by far the strongest. Men well able to judge were of opinion, that nine out of ten, or even a greater proportion, of the Tories, though by no means ready to plot for the Pretender, would not oppose him if he came supported by a sufficient body of French troops, and would never be brought to take the field against the legitimate heir of the Monarchy. Lord Guildford, a Tory of this kind, speaking to Lord Cowper as an intimate private friend, of the rumours current concerning the Pretender, told him he knew nothing of a design formed of bringing him in, and did not believe there was any, "but I frankly acknowledge," he continued, "that if matters go any length, the greatest part of us Tories will willingly submit, while you Whigs will perhaps be fools enough to expose your country to a civil war, and to be laid waste by the French on the one hand, and the Germans on the other."* Tories of this stamp reposed in the confidence that if events rendered it necessary, they could make laws sufficiently strong to secure their religion under a Roman Catholic prince.

Schemes of the Jacobites.

While this body was the most numerous, that of the Jacobites was the most active. Countenanced in some degree by the double-minded policy of Harley, they omitted no

* Hanover Papers. Kreyenberg to Robethon, March 13, 1714.

means to win the people by the conviction of their right, and to awe them with a notion of their strength. A book was published by Dr. Bedford (as has before been mentioned) asserting hereditary right, or legitimacy, against all other titles; the author was discovered, and condemned by the court of Queen's Bench to be imprisoned three years, and to be brought into court with a paper on his head denoting his offence; but the ignominious part of the punishment was remitted by an order signed by the secretary of state.* Of the Scotch peers all but two were Jacobites, and of the Scotch members of the House of Commons, a majority were supposed to be attached to the same interest. The friends of the Stuarts, as they saw the decline of the Queen's health, became at once more busy in their secret intrigues, and more bold in their public language; the health of the Pretender was frequently toasted, and his name mentioned with sympathy and respect. All this time the Chevalier himself was in Lorraine, from whence he could reach England in a very few days. His advisers were active in planning schemes for his landing; some proposed that he should go to Scotland, and put himself at the head of his faithful adherents in that country, while the Duke of Berwick wished that he should come secretly to London, and be introduced by Queen

* Other pamphlets of the same kind are mentioned by historians; two of them, written by Mr. Leslie, are in the Somers Papers. There is a curious diversity on this subject between Lord Stair and Dr. Swift; both writing when the events were fresh in their memory, and to persons acquainted with the facts. Dr. Swift affirms that no books or pamphlets appeared against the Hanover succession, and Lord Stair declares they were published in great numbers. After this, be positive of historical facts!

Anne to the Parliament as her successor.* Had the ministry possessed the decision and sense of Berwick, with his attachment to the Pretender's cause, they would probably have adopted this bold scheme; and a friend of liberty, when he reflects on the feelings of the Queen, the prejudices of the landed gentlemen, and the loyalty of the mob, must tremble at what might have been the result.

Measures of the Whigs

While these things were acting or preparing among the Jacobites, the Whigs bent the whole force of their party to their darling object of securing the Protestant succession. With this view, their chief endeavour was to separate the different bodies of Tories more completely from one another, and to hinder the main body from joining the faction of the Stuarts. Several means were open to them for this purpose. One of the most obvious and effectual, was to bring the Electoral Prince of Hanover to England, and procure for him an establishment suited to his station. The Act of Settlement gave him this advantage over his competitor, that he might come to London without contradiction, and prepare openly his measures for securing the throne after the death of the reigning sovereign. His presence could not fail to give him the very strength, of which as a stranger at a distance, he was most in want, and the apathy of the Tories would be engaged on his side, when he should appear as the possessor, and his rival as the invader of the kingdom. To this object accordingly the Whigs directed all their efforts, and were ably assisted by several powerful letters of the Duke of Marlborough, who represented to his sovereign, that the Electoral Prince, being only the third in succession, his coming could give no

* Mem. de Berwick.

just offence to her. The Queen, however, while she assumed an appearance of cordiality towards the Electoral family, expressed the strongest aversion to the Prince's coming to England; and Harley said, that such a measure would be placing her coffin before her eyes. Yet in order still further to persuade the House of Hanover of his mistress's regard for their persons, and his own attachment to their interests, Oxford sent his cousin, Mr. Thomas Harley, on a mission to the Electoral Court. He seems to have been charged, indeed, with little else than compliments, and empty assurances of regard; so that the government of Hanover, far from being satisfied with his mission, placed in his hands on his departure a strong memorial, praying the Queen to settle some one of the Electoral family in England, and to insist on the removal of the Pretender from Lorraine. But although the Princess Sophia and the Elector were willing to ask for these favours from the Queen, nothing could induce them to send the Electoral Prince to England without obtaining her consent.

Feb. to May, 1714.

April, 1714. Writ of the Duke of Cambridge.

A step indeed was taken which seemed likely to be of importance: Baron Schutz, who was sent to England as Hanoverian Envoy, after a consultation with the Whigs, demanded of the Chancellor a writ for the Electoral Prince, as Duke of Cambridge. The Chancellor declined giving an immediate answer: however, after a council held the same night, the writ was made out as required. But the Queen was so angry with the Hanoverian Envoy for this abrupt demand, that he never was allowed to see her, and was speedily both recalled and disavowed. It has been said, that a few days after this step, it was debated in council, whether or no the Queen should

invite the Electoral Prince to England; that Harley and the Chancellor were in favour of such a measure, but that it was overruled by Bolingbroke. This report, however, does not seem entitled to credit.

In the mean time Mr. Molyneaux, who had been sent by Marlborough to Hanover, and recommended as being "a "man of quality, who had very large possessions in Ireland, "but principally as a man of parts and of merit, with whose ', good principles he was well acquainted," wrote to the Duchess of Marlborough, that the article, praying the Queen that some one of the Electoral family might go to England, was carried with great difficulty in the Hanoverian council; that it was the only step which he believed would be made to support the demand of the Prince's writ; and that he was more amazed at the difficulties the succession met with at Hanover, than at those it encountered in London. Indeed, considering the ambition of mankind, there is nothing more extraordinary, than the negligence with which they sometimes let slip the fairest opportunities of gratifying their desires. That the Electoral Prince of Hanover should not at this time have gone to England, is as singular an instance of imprudent omission, as that Lewis the Fourteenth should not have prevented the expedition of William the Third to England; and had the event been otherwise than it was, would not have been less remarked by historians.

Death of the Princess Sophia.

Soon after the mission of Mr. Harley to Hanover, the Electress Sophia died, in the 84th year of her age. Her death is supposed to have been accelerated by some letters of the Queen addressed to her and the Elector, in which the strongest, not to say harshest terms, were used, in resentment

of the demand of the writ of the Duke of Cambridge, and in opposition to the projected journey of the Prince to England. The Electress Sophia seems to have been a virtuous and respected Princess, firmly attached to her religion, but so much of a Tory in politicks, as to have somewhat embarrassed the measures and counsels of her son.

The Whigs, in the mean time, had not been idle in endeavouring to obtain other securities for the succession. Marlborough procured the appointment of commander of the forces, with the blanks to be filled up in case of the Queen's demise. Cadogan, his friend and pupil, kept a watchful eye on the garrison of Dunkirk, prepared on the first warning to take possession of the Tower of London, and resolved to confine in it the persons suspected of an attachment to the Pretender. The French refugee officers were consulted, and professed themselves zealous in favour of the House of Hanover. The chiefs of the Whig party in England, Somers, Halifax, Sunderland, Cowper, and Wharton attempted, by every means in their power, to form an administration favourable to the Hanover succession. For this purpose they proposed that Nottingham, Anglesey, and other Tories attached to the Protestant line, should, if their efforts in Parliament were successful, form an administration, from which all the Whigs should be excluded. This proposal shews that their efforts were at this time directed to the security of the succession established by Parliament, in preference to every other interest or consideration. The ambiguous conduct of the House of Lords, however, and the triumphant ministerial majority of the House of Commons, prevented this attempt from being attended with success.

Conduct of the Ministry.

While, however, the Whigs were thus apparently defeated in many of their objects, it happened, as it so frequently does in the affairs of the world, that what fortune refused to give to them directly, in the immediate success of their measures, she bestowed upon them in the shape of unskilful enemies and divided opponents. Bolingbroke, writing a confidential letter to the Earl of Strafford this spring, says, "In both "Houses there are the best dispositions I ever saw; but "I am sorry to tell you that these dispositions are unim- "proved; the Whigs pursue their plan with good order and "in concert. The Tories stand at gaze, and expect the "court should regulate their conduct and lead them on; "and the court seems in a lethargy. Nothing, you see, can "come of this, but what would be at once the greatest "absurdity, and the greatest misfortune. The minority, and "that minority unpopular, must get the better of the majo- "rity, who have the sense of the nation on their side. All "that can be done, is doing, to prevail upon our friend, my "Lord Treasurer, to alter his measures, to renew a confi- "dence with the Tories, and a spirit in them, and to give a "regular motion to all the wheels of government. I am "sanguine enough to hope that we shall prevail. Indeed, "it would be pity to lose by management, what none can "wrest by force out of our hands."*

The misconduct of Oxford, and the dissensions which continued to increase between the two Ministers, became more and more marked. Lady Masham, who had been the first cause of the rise of Harley, was likewise the chief instrument of his fall. During the early part of the quarrels

* Bolingbroke's Correspondence.

between Oxford and Bolingbroke, she had, as I have related, strongly embraced the cause of the former, but now her inclinations were totally changed. The first occasion upon which Harley had offended her, was his refusal to pay a demand of upwards of £28,000. for arms and merchandize, said to be sent to Canada. St. John interfered and procured the Queen's order for the payment; but it was afterwards discovered that the public were cheated of about £20,000. on that occasion, great part of which, no doubt, went into the pockets of the favourite.* Another dispute arose on the subject of the fourth part of the Assiento contract: Lady Masham, whose rapacity seems to have been equal to her cunning and ingratitude, insisted upon receiving a large per centage on the Queen's share, and was opposed by the Treasurer. These disputes, which do honour to Harley, strengthened the party of Bolingbroke. He had at the same time brought Lord Chancellor Harcourt to his side; Sir William Wyndham, and the principal Tories, ranged themselves under his banner; and every thing foretold his approaching victory over his opponent.

In the interval, however, while Harley still retained some influence over the mind of his mistress, and still held the keys of the treasury, the vessel of the state, guided by so unsteady a hand, pursued a wavering and uncertain course. Imagining that his opponent was attached to the court of the Pretender, Oxford endeavoured to secure an interest with the Hanoverian family, and their supporters, the Whigs. When he gave Mr. Harley a mission to Hanover, he, at the same time, sent a message to Lord Halifax, intimating that he

* Lord Treasurer Oxford's letter to the Queen. Swift's Enquiry.

was sure he would be glad to hear of the step he was taking. He never spoke however of this message afterwards; and Mr. Harley, though he visited Lord Halifax, said not a word on the subject of Hanover; but, when the Queen's health grew worse, Oxford again made advances to the Whig lords: a conduct at once foolish and contemptible.

The Army.

While this fluctuation was going on in the state, the hesitating policy of Harley was no less observable in the government of the military force. The army, resenting the treatment it had met with towards the end of the war, and the stop which had been put to its progress in the career of victory, had frequently shewn its dislike to the Tory ministry, and its attachment to the Protestant succession. Even so early as the year 1710, Generals Meredith, Macartney, and Honeywood had been superseded, on the charge of having drunk as a toast, "Confusion to the New Ministry." Some other officers were afterwards punished for an indiscreet manifestation of the same feelings. Sir Richard Temple, who had served with great distinction during the war, was discharged from the Queen's service, and had his regiment taken from him, without any other cause alleged than that the Queen had no further occasion for his service. Lieut.-Colonel Coote was deprived of his company of the Guards, for drinking the health of the Elector of Hanover, and expressing, with marked violence, his dislike to Lord Oxford: General Cadogan was forced to sell his regiment: the Duke of Argyle, the Earl of Stair, and General Davenport lost their regiments, and were ordered to leave the army. Black lists were said to be made of every regiment, according to which the army was to be purged. Lieut.-Colonel Sidney, brother to the Earl of

Leicester, and several other captains of the foot-guards, were ordered to sell their companies; officers less liberal in politics were named to succeed them.*

But, although these commissions were to be sold considerably below their usual price, the gentlemen named in the room of those to be displaced, had not the money at hand, and the Treasurer was asked to advance £10,000. for this necessary service. After several delays, however, he positively refused, and said he did not see why he was to assist in advancing the ends of his enemies.† Thus, in consequence of the distractions of the ministry, no firm resolution of any kind was taken. The temper of the army was irritated, without its composition being changed; and the country was alarmed, without any formidable preparations having been made to introduce the Pretender. Lord Peterborough, who had been sent on a foreign mission, being asked, when abroad, what was the state of the court and councils of England, replied, that he really could not tell, as he had been out of England a fortnight; and Swift, to the same purport, declares that no system of policy was acted upon for four days together.

The dissensions of the ministry had been openly revealed to the world at the end of the session of parliament, in the discussions relative to the three explanatory articles of the treaty of commerce with Spain. While Bolingbroke put forth all his vigour in their defence, Harley allowed that they might be altered, and by his lukewarm apologies encouraged the attacks of the opposition. This conduct gave fresh pro-

* Tindal. Hardwicke Papers. Lord Stair's Memorial. Hanover Papers.

† Swift's Enquiry.

vocation to his colleagues, while, on the other hand, the cabals against him were still further encouraged by the Jacobites. The Duke of Berwick in particular sent over to the Duke of Ormond and his friends, the strongest representations against the Treasurer, shewing them likewise in the clearest manner, that they and their adherents were utterly ruined if they did not do all in their power to restore the Stuarts. Convinced of the truth of what he said, they employed Lady Masham to exert all her influence against the falling minister.* Thus impelled on all sides, the Queen determined to deprive him of the white staff, and to make no prime minister in his room, vainly imagining that in spite of her broken health, and imperfect understanding, she should be able to retain all the power of the state in her own person.† Before his dismissal, however, a violent scene occurred in her presence, between Lady Masham and Lord Oxford, when the latter declared, "that he had been abused by lies and misrepresentations, and that he would leave some people as low as he found them." On the other hand, Lady Masham said to Harley in her own house, "You never did the Queen any service, nor are you capable of doing her any;" yet, strange to relate, he supped with her that same evening in company with Lord Bolingbroke. Even at this decisive moment, he is accused by his enemies of having been more intent upon obtaining the Cavendish estate for Lord Harley, who had lately married Lady Henrietta Pelham, than upon public affairs. At length, on the 27th of July, the Queen took the staff of Treasurer from him, and told the Council, that her reasons for parting with him were, that he neglected all business,

Dismissal of Oxford.

* Mem. de Berwick, 2, p. 206. † Erasmus Lewis to Dr. Swift, July 6, 1714.

that he was seldom to be understood; that when he did explain himself she could not depend upon the truth of what he said; that he never came to her at the time she appointed; and that he behaved himself towards her with bad manners, indecency, and disrespect. Erasmus Lewis, Lord Oxford's secretary, who writes an account of these charges, in a letter to Swift, adds a confession of their truth in the words, "pudet hæc opprobria nobis."*

Thus fell Lord Oxford, after six years of power, during which time, although neither thwarted by hostile influence in the Cabinet at home, nor by misfortune abroad, he contrived to break up a powerful party, of which he was the leader, and to alienate, at once, his sovereign, his friends, the adherents of the Pretender, and those of the House of Hanover. In troubled times, as in a boat on a stormy sea, the best chance of safety is to steer either against the waves or with them; he who attempts to take them sideways, will probably perish in the ocean. Thus it was with the power and reputation of Harley.

The Lord Treasurer being thus dismissed, the next concern was, how his place was to be filled up. It appears, from what we can learn, that Bolingbroke was to retain the post which he held, with the hope, amounting almost to a certainty, that he should inherit the power of Oxford. The Treasury was to be put into commission: Sir William Wyndham to be First Lord, with the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Strafford was to be at the head of the Admiralty; Lord Marr, Secretary of State for Scotland, and Bishop Atterbury, Lord Privy Seal.

* Swift's Correspondence.

Intentions of Bolingbroke.

It has been a matter of speculation, whether Bolingbroke intended to restore the Pretender. Before discussing this question, it will be useful to record the few facts that have been preserved. In his public and private correspondence, from his entering into office to the time of which we speak, there are but one or two phrases to be found, which imply any concern in the favour of the Pretender;* none that pledge him to forward the object of the Jacobites. The day after Oxford's dismissal, he gave a dinner to Stanhope, Walpole, and many others of the Whig party, whom he assured of his good intentions in favour of the Hanover succession; but when the Whigs demanded, as a proof of his sincerity, that he would obtain the removal of the Pretender from Lorraine, he told them that he could never get the consent of the Queen to what she deemed the banishment of her brother. The same evening Mr. John Drummond was ordered to be in readiness, at Kensington, to carry dispatches to Hanover. One of the intimate friends of Lord Bolingbroke told Carte, the historian, that these dispatches were intended to convey the assurance of Bolingbroke's attachment to the Court of Hanover; that Bolingbroke and Lord Harcourt had determined between them, to maintain the Protestant succession, and to send the Duke of Ormond, the only pledged Jacobite among them, to Ireland, in a kind of honourable banishment.†

Although the light derived from these facts is extremely feeble, yet I am inclined to infer from them, and from the

* In a letter to the Duke d'Aumont he says, "Le Chevalier Wyndham se fera un plaisir d'être util au nommé Jacques, quand il reviendra de son élection." 15 Sept. 1713. Correspondence.

† Stuart Papers.

known dispositions of Bolingbroke, that he was far from having decided in his own mind, upon the recal of the exile family; had he done so, some traces of it would surely have been discernible in his correspondence. It must be recollected, likewise, that Bolingbroke was not the slave of any prejudice; his sole view was to retain power for himself and his party. If it were possible then, for him to convince the House of Hanover of his attachment to their interests, it is most likely he would have preferred maintaining the law of Parliament, and respecting the religious feelings of the people, to the hazardous attempt of restoring a proscribed Prince, whose confidence he did not enjoy, assisted only by the lukewarm affections of the Queen, and the doubtful inclinations of the Tories. It seems probable therefore, that he would have offered his services to the House of Hanover, and that only, in case of their being neglected or rejected there, would he have pursued, with the ardour and vigour that were natural to him, the project of confirming his own power, by the restoration of a King, who would owe the Crown to his exertions. This view is countenanced by the following expressions used by him in a letter to Lord Strafford, in March, 1714. "Our laws, our oaths, "a just concern for our religion and liberty, will keep the na- "tion firm and steady in their adherence to a Protestant, and "in their opposition to a Popish Prince. But if a pretended "danger of the succession shall be made use of, to introduce "foreign forces amongst us, the object of men's fears may "come in time to be changed. Britain must not, on any "account, be made the theatre of confusion; our Crown has "been given, but our country must not be conquered," &c.*

* Corresp. March 23d, 1714.

In this passage his language somewhat resembles that of Lord Dartmouth, which has been already quoted.

Death of the Queen.

His projects however, whatever they may have been, were destined to be baffled. The dispute between the ministers, and a council which sate afterwards, and lasted till two o'clock in the morning, produced a visible disorder in the Queen's health. She said to one of her physicians that "she should "not outlive it." In fact, the agitation of her spirits, according to the opinion of Dr. Shadwell, prevented the discharge of an imposthumation in her leg, and was thus the immediate cause of her death. On the morning of the 29th she was seized by a fit of apoplexy, from which she never recovered. The Committee of the Privy Council, called the Cabinet, were sitting to consult upon this new aspect of affairs, when the Dukes of Somerset and Argyll entered the council chamber without a summons. Bolingbroke was startled at their appearance, but the Duke of Shrewsbury, who presided at the board, thanked them for their attendance, and desired them to take their places. They immediately moved for an examination of the physicians, who forthwith attended, and pronounced the Queen to be in great danger. Upon this Somerset and Argyll urged the necessity of filling up the place of Lord Treasurer; the Duke of Shrewsbury being proposed, was unanimously agreed to, and the Queen, in an interval when she possessed her senses, was informed of the recommendation, and willingly assented to it. Thus the Duke of Shrewsbury was for a short time possessed of three of the highest offices of the kingdom; he was at once Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Chamberlain, and Lord Treasurer. But the Queen's days were numbered. She expired on Sunday the first of

August, 1714. Bolingbroke, in a letter to Swift, of the 3rd, says, " The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the Queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us !"

Her character.

It would be a waste of time to attempt to give in detail the character of Queen Anne; it is impossible either to praise or to censure her greatly, without falling into exaggeration. Let us then content ourselves with the character which Marlborough, who had known her long and well, gave of her, at the courts both of Hanover and St. Germains, that she was " a good sort " of woman." She was, in fact, an affectionate wife, a kind mother, a charitable and pious Queen. She loved to have her own way, and yet, from weakness of understanding, always fell under the government of one favourite or another. Her preferences and dislikes, adopted from little circumstances, and paltry motives, were, however, the stars which ruled the destinies of Europe. It was, because she fondly doated on the Duchess of Marlborough, that her reign is adorned by the glories of Blenheim and Ramillies; it was because Mrs. Masham, by a chambermaid's intrigue, supplanted her benefactress that a stop was put to the war which ravaged the continent; it was in great part owing to the influence of the Duchess of Somerset, another favourite lady, that the Queen did not attempt to recal her brother. Thus it is, that " a " good sort of woman," moved by the most ordinary passions, and, in fact, consulting only her own ease and comfort, may change at pleasure the fortunes of the world.

The bold measure of the Dukes of Somerset and Argyll, and the disheartened state of Bolingbroke and his friends, made the succesion of the House of Hanover, so long the

subject of doubt and speculation, easy and undisturbed. Before the Queen died, the Privy Counsellors being generally summoned, Somers, and many other Whigs had hastened to attend the Council. As soon as Anne expired, George the First was proclaimed King, with the usual solemnities, in London and Westminster; the same ceremony took place in Dublin and Edinburgh, and with the exception of an anonymous letter received by the Mayor of Oxford, desiring him to proclaim the Pretender, there was not even a breath of opposition. Agreeably to the provisions of the Regency bill, the seven great Officers of State, together with eighteen Peers, named in an instrument signed by the Elector of Hanover, took upon themselves the administration of the kingdom, and the Earl of Dorset was dispatched to Hanover, to inform the new King of his accession.*

George the First proclaimed.

Thus was accomplished the great work of the Hanover succession. If we reflect, how much attached the people of England are to their Kings; the sisterly affection of Queen Anne, and her influence over the nation; the general dislike of a German connexion, and the indifference or tardiness of

* The Great Officers of State were, the
Archbishop of Canterbury,
Lord Chancellor,
Lord President,
Lord Privy Seal,
First Lord of the Admiralty,
Lord Treasurer,
Lord Chief Justice.

The principal Peers were, the
Dukes of Shrewsbury,
Somerset,
Devonshire,
Argyll,
The Earls of Anglesey,
Carlisle,
Nottingham,
Orford,
Lords Townsend,
Halifax, and
Cowper.

the House of Hanover itself in taking advantage of opportunities as they arose, the elevation of George the First to the throne of these realms, must strike us as a very extraordinary event. In some respects it is even more wonderful than the Revolution of 1688. The son of James the Second, instead of having roused the anger of the nation, like his father, was, on the contrary, an object of pity; he appeared to them in the character of a Prince, proscribed for no other crime but his descent from the royal blood of England, and his natural ambition to fill the throne of his ancestors. On the other hand, the character of the Elector of Hanover was not calculated to warm his partisans, or conciliate the affections of the people he aspired to govern.

Character of George the First.

George the First was, in person, about a middle size; his countenance was deficient in expression, his dress was plain, he could not speak English. His habits of life were thoroughly German, and at the mature age of fifty-four, no change in this respect could reasonably be expected. His manners were cold and reserved, he not only did not court, but he seemed to repel the advances of his new subjects. He was naturally fond of the obscurity of a private station, so much so that when he went to the play, he concealed himself in the box of the maids of honour, behind his mistress and her niece. He had no taste for letters or the arts. His better qualities were justice, frugality, and punctuality in business; virtues rather of a solid than a shining nature, and which, far from captivating the favour of the multitude, are apt to make their possessor unpopular with the vast number who require partiality to themselves, rather than a just consideration for their country. So far did the Elector of Hanover carry his

parsimony, that he would raise no troops to secure his succession, and the principal Whigs were obliged to advance from their own purses, the sums necessary to gain some ignoble men of rank, whom nothing else could induce to join them.

Reflexions on the Hanover Succession.

If we reflect on the means by which this great event was brought about, we shall see, it was almost entirely effected by skilful management on the one side, and the want of it, on the other. The perpetual activity of the Whigs, their vigorous appeals to the nation, and their admirable party discipline, made it extremely difficult for the Jacobites to form any extensive combination, or to prepare the mind of the nation for the change they meditated. On the other hand, the indecision and insincerity of Harley broke his followers into divisions, insomuch that, after four years of power, the Tory party was declared, by one of its leaders, to be dissolved.* Perhaps there never was an instance which so clearly demonstrated the importance of political union, and the value of a few able chiefs.

It may be asked, however, whether the object were worth the hazard, at which it was procured; whether the religion and liberties of England might not have been equally well secured, by good laws, under the hereditary descendant of the Stuarts; and whether it was wise and prudent to incur the risk of civil war, and the certainty of long and bitter dissention, in order to exclude one royal family and admit another? Surely, it may be said, if your limitations on monarchy are of any real value, they must be good to bind one king as well as another; as efficient for preventing a Stuart from

* Bolingbroke. See Swift's Correspondence.

invading our religion, as for preventing a Brunswick from overturning our political constitution.

To these objections a short answer might be given, by appealing to experience and referring to the reign of James the Second. The securities enacted by the jealousy of the Parliament, celebrated for their prosecution of the Popish plot, and their votes on the Exclusion bill, were then found of little avail against a Prince who was determined to throw prerogative into the scale against law. But, even without quoting this decisive experiment, I think it may be shewn, that the admission of the Son of James the Second could not fail to be attended with the greatest perils and misfortunes.

If we look, in the first place, to religion, it is evident that a bigotted Roman Catholic King, and a zealous Protestant people, could hardly fail to disagree. It is easy for the Prince to promise that he will do nothing against the security of the Protestant church, but even if his professions are sincere, it is almost impossible, when the minds of men are in a state of irritation, to agree in practice on the definition of these words. The slightest alleviation of the sufferings of the Roman Catholics, the smallest relaxation of the penal code, would be considered by a jealous people, as the commencement of a scheme to restore the supremacy of the Pope. Besides, it must be considered that, the Pretender was not only a Roman Catholic, but a bigotted Papist; he had been bred up by political priests, and priestly politicians, in a country where Protestants had been hunted down, and slaughtered like wild beasts. There cannot be a greater difference between one civilized man and another, than between such a bigot as this, and a mild tolerant Roman Catholic. The very pro-

fessions of liberality which came from the Pretender, flowed from the poisoned sources of jesuitical counsel.

In a political view, the danger of disagreement was no less imminent; and the chance of the triumph of the restored King over the nation, much greater. Calculate, as we may, on the advantages of limited monarchy, it is impossible to carry on the machinery of such a government with an unwilling sovereign. A chief magistrate, invested with the power of the sword, the distribution of all honours and rewards, and the choice of foreign alliances, may always disturb the execution of the laws, and derange the operation of the wisest constitution. Let us suppose, for instance, that James the Third had claimed the dispensing power; that the Parliament had resisted, and that he had called in a French army to support his authority. What check could then have been put in force against him? To stop the supplies? That would have been to disarm the country, at the moment when its strength was required against a foreign enemy. To impeach the Ministers? the King would have dissolved the Parliament, and never have called another till he had reduced the people to passive obedience under his sway. It is necessary, therefore, for the working of a limited monarchy, that the King should himself be willing to be limited, and unless he is so, the machinery must soon stop of itself. But, in order to have a King, with so moderate a disposition, the best, if not the only security is, that he should reign by a national, and not a personal title. For the king, who claims the throne by inheritance, from a race of absolute sovereigns, will always be uneasy till he obtain the power which was enjoyed by his ancestors, and the safeguards for the people's liberties will

ever be considered by him, as encroachments on his right. But he who is placed on the throne, by the summons of the people, cannot complain that he is defrauded of his lawful power, for it is only from the will of the nation that he derives any power whatever; he cannot say that his authority is incomplete, because all that he has is the free gift of his subjects. Let us add to this, that he is withheld from attempting to become absolute by the existence of a Pretender, whose claim, in this respect, is better grounded than his, and who is only excluded because the nation will not submit to arbitrary power, in any king whatsoever. The first attempt, on his part, therefore, to revive an exorbitant authority, would be followed by the recal of a family whose ancient guilt would be forgotten, in comparison with his more recent offence. Besides this, however, such an attempt is rendered almost impossible, at least for a long time, by the want of any party or set of men in the nation, capable of supporting his pretensions. For those who are in favour of unlimited authority, would give it to another person, and those who are in favour of his person are against an unlimited authority. Thus, the sovereign is obliged, ultimately, to confide in those who brought him in, but brought him in with conditions; and the only party zealous in supporting his title, is at the same time, the most concerned in placing checks upon his prerogative.

The Lords Justices.

The Lords Justices named by the new king, were chiefly Whigs, with the addition of those Tory peers who had appeared the most zealous for the succession. Yet it excited some surprise, to find that neither Somers, Marlborough, or Sunderland were in the list. The reasons of these exclusions it would be difficult to assign. The spirit of the new govern-

ment was however soon perceptible. Addison was appointed their Secretary, and Bolingbroke, who had so long laboured to attain the supreme power, and had so lately reached it, was now seen waiting with his papers at the door of the council; where many passed him with scorn, who a few days before would have given half their fortunes for his smile. Still further disgrace attended him. On the 28th of August letters arrived from the King, ordering his removal from his post; Shrewsbury, Somerset, and Cowper immediately took the seals, and locked the door of his office.

Meeting of Parliament.

The Parliament met on Sunday, the day of the Queen's decease. Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Speaker, being absent, Secretary Bromley proposed that the house should adjourn to Wednesday, but Sir Richard Onslow opposing this delay, as an unnecessary waste of time, it was agreed to adjourn only till the following morning. Three days were occupied in taking the oaths; on the Thursday the Chancellor made a speech to both houses, in the name of the Lords Justices, announcing the accession, desiring the House of Commons to provide for the several branches of revenue which had expired by the Queen's death, and excusing themselves from saying more, on the ground that they had not received the King's commands.

The Commons now took their tone from Walpole and Onslow, two of the chief Whig members. When Secretary Bromley moved an address to the King, and enlarged on the great loss the nation had sustained, Walpole proposed to add "something more substantial than words, by giving assurances "of making good all parliamentary funds." An addition to to this effect was accordingly made.

Civil List. When the civil list came to be voted, the Tories, under pretence of zeal, proposed to give the King £1,000,000, instead of £700,000, the revenue enjoyed by Queen Anne; but the Whigs refusing to support the proposition, it was dropped. It is curious that a similar artifice was resorted to by the Tories at the commencement of the reign of king William, when they maintained that he had a right to the revenue settled on James the Second. In neither case does this shallow stratagem appear to have had any success. The bill for the revenue passed with two new clauses; one for paying the arrears of the Hanover troops, formerly a great bone of contention between Harley and St. John; and the other for paying £100,000. to any one who should apprehend the Pretender, if he should attempt to land in the British dominions. Parliament was then prorogued.

All eyes were now turned towards Hanover. The Elector had so far acted wisely, that he had not given any discouragement to either party. The two ministers Bernsdorf and Gortz, the former of whom had been in favour of the succession, and the latter against it, espoused, after the demise, the former the Whig, and the latter the Tory side.* Lord Strafford had always kept up a correspondence with Hanover, and Lord Clarendon, a person of the meanest capacity, who was sent as envoy extraordinary, just before the death of the Queen, was received by the Elector with assurances of his full confidence in the Queen's promises, and his total ignorance of the demand of a writ for the Duke of Cambridge. By language of this kind, the hopes of the Tories had been kept up, and when the death of the Queen came like a thunderbolt, falling upon

* Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Mr. Etough.

their party, they clung, in the total absence of method and preparation, to the kind words of the court of Hanover, as a foundation for their dependence on real credit and substantial power under the new government.* Halifax is said to have kept alive these expectations, by projecting a kind of mixed administration, in which Mr. Bromley and Sir Thomas Hanmer were to have had high situations. But all such projects were soon scattered into air. The new king, on his arrival at the Hague, appointed Lord Townshend Secretary of State, with the power of naming his colleague. Mr. Stanhope was chosen, by the advice of Horace Walpole, for this situation. Lord Townshend, who was thus raised to so conspicuous a situation, was of a Tory family; his father had been created a peer by Charles the Second. On first coming into the House of Lords, in 1696, he had voted with the Tories, but soon attached himself to Somers, and became a warm partizan of the Whigs. He was named joint-plenipotentiary with the Duke of Marlborough to open the conferences at Gertruydenberg, and afterwards concluded the barrier treaty at the Hague, for which he was attacked by the Tory ministers. He had the character of being an able man of business, well versed in negociations, an ungraceful and perplexed, but sensible speaker, rough in manners, hot in temper, too fond of bold experiments in politics, but honest and honourable in the extreme.

Landing of George the First.

On the 18th of September, about seven weeks after the death of the Queen, George the First landed at Greenwich. The chief persons in the kingdom crowded to pay their court, and explore in the countenance and manner of their

* Letter to Wyndham.

new sovereign, the stamp of their fate, and the termination of their hopes and fears. Lord Harcourt, who arrived with a patent for the peerage of the Prince of Wales, was abruptly dismissed; the Duke of Ormond, who was hastening to Greenwich, was forbidden to appear in the royal presence, and Lord Oxford, who had shewn more joy in proclaiming the King, than his friends thought respectful towards the late Queen, was barely admitted in the crowd to kiss the King's hand.

New Ministry appointed.

The new administration, which had been previously arranged by Townshend, was now officially announced. Lord Halifax was appointed First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Cowper, Chancellor, Nottingham, President of the Council; Marlborough, Commander in Chief and Master General of the Ordnance; Wharton, who was made a Marquis, Lord Privy Seal; Orford, First Lord of the Admiralty; Shrewsbury, Lord Chamberlain and Groom of the Stole; the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Steward of the Household; Somerset, Master of the Horse; Sunderland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Walpole, Paymaster of the Forces, with the management of the House of Commons.

In this arrangement it will be seen, that nearly all the principal offices, both of the ministry and of the household, were occupied by the Whigs. Shrewsbury was the only one of the late Queen's ministers who was retained by the King, and Nottingham, the only decided Tory, who was placed in a high office. The new cabinet consisted of the principal members of the administration, with the addition of Somers, whose infirmities did not permit him to take any active department. Lord Sunderland was much disappointed at being

excluded from the management of affairs at home, and his father-in-law, Marlborough, was scarcely less displeased at finding himself of little weight in the administration.*

The policy of George the First, in putting his government so completely in the hands of the Whigs, has formed a fruitful theme of invective, especially on the part of those who were excluded, against the blindness of the Prince, and the persecution of party. But these invectives have little solid foundation. The Elector of Hanover knew perfectly well that the Whigs were the unchangeable friends of his succession; and what could be more natural than to assemble them round his throne, and arm them with the means of defending it? On the other hand, he knew equally well, that half the Tories had been wavering between his title and that of his rival: to entrust his government to their hands, therefore, would clearly have been a mark of singular imprudence. Indeed it could scarcely have been insisted upon, even by the Tories, that they, the friends of hereditary succession, should have been called to the councils of the elective Sovereign, while the Whigs, the strenuous defenders of a parliamentary title, were excluded. As to the plan of forming an administration composed of the two parties, the violence of the late disputes in Parliament, the indignation of the Whigs at the Treaty of Utrecht, and the opposite principles of government on which the two parties acted, made it totally impossible. If the King had seriously

* His Duchess, whose opinions on political matters are always much sounder than his own, had strongly advised him not take any part in the new government. See an admirable letter of her's on this subject in Coxe's Marlborough, vol. iii.

attempted such a coalition, he would have been abandoned by the whole Whig party.

So far then, George the First may be considered as having acted wisely. Whether the Tory leaders should have been prosecuted, is another, and very different question. The intentions of the ministers on this subject, were partly made known by the King's proclamation for calling a new Parliament. In this proclamation, after expressing his concern at the difficulties in which he found the public affairs, the King openly avows a hope, that the people will elect such persons " as shewed a firmness to the Protestant succession " when it was in danger." This language could not be mistaken.

Elections.

The elections went greatly in favour of the Whigs, and a large majority of that party were returned. It will appear singular, that such should have been the result of an appeal to the people two years after a general election, at which five-sixths of the successful candidates had been Tories. The influence of the crown, and the loyal disposition of the people, afford the only solution of this problem.

March 19th, 1715. Meeting of Parliament. King's Speech.

The new Parliament met on the 19th of March, 1715, when Mr. Spencer Compton, proposed by the ministers, was chosen Speaker. The King, in his speech, lamented that many essential conditions of the late peace had not been performed, and pointed out the necessity of defensive alliances, in order to insure their execution; he regretted the injuries suffered by trade, and observed with surprise, that the public debt had been increased since the peace. He likewise remarked, that the Pretender boasted of the assistance he expected to derive from

England, and that he was still permitted to reside in Lorraine. He concluded, by declaring his resolution to make the constitution in church and state the rule of his government, and to devote the chief care of his life to the happiness, ease, and prosperity of his people.

Address of the Commons.

The addresses of both houses spoke in strong terms of the dishonour of the peace, and the delinquency of the late ministers. But the address of the Commons was by far the stronger of the two. "We are sensibly touched," they declared, "not only with the disappointment, but the reproach "brought upon the nation, by the unsuitable conclusion "of a war which was carried on at so vast an expence, and "was attended with such unparalleled successes: but as "that dishonour cannot in justice be imputed to the whole "nation, so we firmly hope and believe, that through your "Majesty's great wisdom, and the faithful endeavours of your "Commons, the reputation of your kingdoms will, in due "time, be vindicated and restored." Speaking of the Pretender, they said, "It is with just resentment we observe, "that the Pretender still lives in Lorraine, and that he has "the presumption, by declarations from thence, to stir up "your Majesty's subjects to rebellion. But that which raises "the utmost indignation of your Commons is, that it appears "therein that his hopes were built upon the measures that "had been taken for some time past in Great Britain. It "shall be our business to trace out those measures, wherein "he places his hopes, and to bring the authors of them to "condign punishment."

Manifesto of the Pretender.

The passages in the King's speech, and in the addresses, speaking of the assistance the Pretender expected to receive

from England, alluded to a paragraph in a manifesto issued by him, dated August 29, 1714, and sent to some of the principal ministers in England, expressed in these words: "Upon the death of the Princess, our sister, of whose good "intentions towards us, we could not for some time past, "well doubt; and this was the reason we then sate still, ex- "pecting the good effects thereof, which were unfortunately "prevented by her deplorable death." It must be admitted that, whether true or false, nothing could be more cruel to his adherents, or more imprudent, for his own sake, than the publication of such a paper, without any attempt to support it by deeds.

Soon after the meeting of parliament, Sir William Wyndham attacked the proclamation for calling a new Parliament, which he said, "was not only unprecedented and unwarrant- "able, but dangerous to the very being of Parliaments." Being called upon to explain himself more fully, he said, "Every member was free to speak his thoughts." Upon this Lord Finch made some reflexions on what he had said; and on his again refusing to explain himself, some members cried out, "The Tower, the Tower!" But Walpole getting up, said, "Mr. Speaker, I am not for gratifying the "desire which the member who occasions this debate shews, "of being sent to the Tower. It would make him too con- "siderable." After this sensible speech, the house first decided that Sir William Wyndham should withdraw, and then resolved he should be reprimanded by the Speaker.

The menaces held forth in the address of the House of Commons were not long suffered to sleep. The papers of Bolingbroke, Strafford, and Prior having been seized, Secretary

Stanhope presented to the House of Commons those which were deemed of importance, and a Committee of Secrecy was appointed to examine if they afforded any just cause of impeachment. Sometime afterwards Shippen, an honest and consistent friend of the exiled family, having insinuated that, notwithstanding the clamour which had been raised against the late ministry, the secret committee would never be able to bring any proof of their guilt, Walpole, who was their chairman, replied, that so far was this from being true, that he wanted words to express the villainy of the late Frenchified ministry. On the 9th of June, two months after the appointment of the committee, Walpole presented the report, which he continued reading without interruption for five hours. When he had concluded, Sir T. Hanmer and his friends moved that the report be printed, and the farther consideration postponed to the 21st. But Walpole opposed this proposal; and being supported by Secretary Stanhope, the motion of Sir T. Hanmer was negatived on a division, by two hundred and eighty to one hundred and sixty. It must be confessed that the rejection of this reasonable motion shewed a desire to precipitate accusation, which savoured more of passion than of justice. Walpole then rose again to impeach Lord Bolingbroke of high treason, and other high crimes and misdemeanours; saying at the same time, that if any member had any thing to say in his behalf, he had no doubt the House was ready to hear him. A deep silence ensued for some minutes, upon which Mr. Hungerford said, that in his opinion nothing was mentioned in the report relating to Lord Bolingbroke, amounting to the crime of high treason. General Ross said, he wondered no one spoke in favour of Lord Bolingbroke;

Report of the Committee of Secrecy. June 9th, 1715.

Impeachment of Bolingbroke and Oxford

and that, for his own part, he should reserve himself for a properer time. The vote for the impeachment passed without a division. Thus unsupported was Bolingbroke, in the House of Commons, which he had triumphantly led when pursuing that very course of conduct for which he was now impeached! Lord Coningsby then rose and said, "The "worthy chairman of the committee has impeached the hand, "but I impeach the head; he has impeached the clerk, and "I the justice; he has impeached the scholar, and I the "master: I impeach Robert Earl of Oxford and Earl Mor- "timer of high treason, and other high crimes and misde- "meanours." Mr. Auditor Harley and Mr. Foley, Lord Oxford's brother-in-law, spoke in favour of their relation; and Sir Joseph Jekyll, who had been on the committee of secrecy, said, that although they had more than sufficient evidence to convict Lord Bolingbroke of high treason, he doubted whether they had sufficient to convict Lord Oxford. Another member however, stating, that they had besides the papers some *vivâ voce* evidence to bring forward, the vote passed, and the committee of secrecy were ordered to prepare articles of impeachment against the two lords accused.

The report of the secret committee consisted almost entirely of details relating to the peace of Utrecht. As these details belong properly to the history of a former period, I shall only say that the report, supported by papers now first brought to light, affirmed that, in contravention of the article of the treaty of the general alliance, which stipulated that no treaty should be made with France, except in conjunction with all the allies, the late ministers had negotiated and signed separate preliminaries of peace, while they pretended

in Holland that they were observing the terms of the alliance. In proof of this charge were brought forward the clandestine negotiations with Menager; the separate articles signed by Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Dartmouth; the suspension of arms; the seizure of Ghent and Bruges; the Duke of Ormond's acting in concert with the French general; Lord Bolingbroke's journey to France; and the precipitate conclusion of the peace of Utrecht, by which the Spanish monarchy was delivered into the hands of a prince of the House of Bourbon. The affairs of Dunkirk and the Assiento were reserved by the committee for a separate report.

To say whether or no the ministers were justified in this extreme prosecution of their predecessors, is a question of some difficulty. On the one hand it might be urged, that the negociations bore decisive testimony of a collusion existing between the late ministry and the French, to the prejudice of the allies, at whose side we had so long fought; that the nation demanded some atonement for the hasty sacrifice, by the cessation of arms, of the glory and honour, we had acquired by so many victories; that the allies, whom the late ministry had betrayed, would never more put any faith in us, unless the ministry were carefully distinguished from the nation, and made to afford, by their signal punishment, a proof that the people of England abhorred their conduct; that as the prerogative of making peace and war gave a discretion to the ministers almost unbounded, so much the more necessary was it to punish every instance of abuse; that it could hardly be denied, many of the late ministry were prepared to bring in the Pretender, and might still attempt

it, if a check were not put to their machinations, by a strict and fearless execution of the ancient right of punishing wicked and pernicious counsellors.

On the other hand it might be said, that even granting the conduct of the late ministers to have been blameable, yet the approbation of two successive parliaments, and the tacit acquiescence of the nation, gave them a title to indemnity. The negotiations, which were now blazoned forth in the report of the secret committee, had been tolerably well known from the time of their taking place, and the alledged intercourse with the Pretender was by no means proved, in a manner to afford solid ground of accusation. Peace, it was well known, was the desire of a great part of the nation; and in giving effect to those wishes, the ministers had honestly and conscientiously pursued what they, and the ruling party in parliament, thought the true interest of the kingdom. If every ministry were thus to prosecute their predecessors, because they did not agree in their opinions, the country would soon become a scene of disorder and vengeance, similar to the wildest and most turbulent democracies. Allowing, however, still further, that cases may sometimes occur where measures approved by successive parliaments may become matter of accusation, nothing but the strongest necessity can justify such a proceeding. But in this case sound policy, far from urging the prosecution, was decidedly opposed to it. The Tories, evidently routed and discomfited, were broken, disheartened, and divided. They had permitted every office and authority to fall into the hands of the Whigs without a shadow of resistance. To throw the fire of a prosecution into

this dead mass, would be to rekindle flames that were extinct, and rouse a spirit which required only vigour and concentration, to become once more formidable.

The reasons against the prosecution, which I confess appear to me the stronger, were not however sufficient to moderate the course of the Whig ministry. The violence of party feeling at so critical a moment, and the recollection of the danger they had just escaped, were probably their ruling motives; the less charitable of their observers, however, attributed their conduct to a desire of pushing their adversaries into the arms of the Pretender, and securing their own favour with the King, as the exclusive friends of the House of Hanover.

Flight of Bolingbroke.

The behaviour of the two principal persons under accusation at this juncture, was very different. Bolingbroke, who, on the Queen's death, had been very confident; who had boasted to one of his friends that in two months he would make the Whigs pass for Jacobites,* and who, by the advice of Lord Trevor, had appeared very forward in Parliament, found his boldness greatly diminish when the strength of the new ministry became manifest. As things assumed a more threatening aspect, his resolution began still more to fail, and at length, considering the accusation against him might take a serious turn, he determined upan retiring to France. In pursuance of this scheme, after appearing one evening publicly at Drury Lane theatre, and bespeaking a play for the next night, he went off in the disguise of servant of one of the French messengers, to Dover, and there hired a vessel which carried him to Calais. He wrote from

* Letter to Swift, in Swift's Works.

Dover a letter to a friend, in which he says, "I had certain "and repeated informations from some, who are in the secret "of affairs, that a resolution was taken, by those who have "power to execute it, to pursue me to the scaffold. My "blood was to have been the cement of a new alliance. Had "there been the least reason to hope for a fair and open trial, "after having been already prejudged, unheard, by the two "Houses of Parliament, I should not have declined the "strictest examination. I challenge the most inveterate of "my enemies to produce any one instance of criminal corres- "pondence, or the least corruption in any part of the admi- "nistration in which I was concerned. It is a comfort that "will remain with me, in all misfortunes, that I served "her Majesty faithfully and dutifully, in that especially, "which she had most at heart, relieving her people from a "bloody and expensive war; and that I have always been "too much an Englishman to sacrifice the interest of my "country to any foreign ally whatsoever."

Conduct of Oxford.

The Earl of Oxford, on the other hand, who had skulked about uneasy and alarmed, from the time of the King's landing, appeared, and took his seat in the House of Lords two days after the appointment of the Secret Committee. The day after the resolution to impeach him, he attended in his place, and seemed at first undisturbed, but finding that most of the peers avoided him, and that even Lord Poulett was shy of exchanging a few words with him, he left the House,

Articles of impeachment against him.

On the 8th of July, the articles of impeachment against Lord Oxford, being prepared by the Committee of Secrecy, were read in the House of Commons. The first ten, which related to the negotiations for a separate peace, deceiving

the Dutch, and the suspension of arms, were agreed to by the House. The eleventh article charged Lord Oxford with "traiterously aiding, assisting, and adhering to the French "King," while the war still continued between France and England, and averred, that he "maliciously, falsely, and trai- "terously, did counsel and advise the said enemy in what "manner, and by what methods the important town of Tour- "nay, then in possession of the States General, might be "gained from them to the French King."

The other articles had been voted to be high crimes and misdemeanours, but this was charged as high treason. Upon this question a great debate arose. Sir Robert Raymond, Mr. Bromley, Sir William Wyndham, Auditors Harley and Foley, Mr. Ward and Mr. Hungerford, maintained that the offence, if proved, did not amount to high treason, and were supported by Sir Joseph Jekyl, who being a member of the Committee of Secrecy, a lawyer, and a Whig, great weight attached to his opinion. Walpole answered him with some warmth, that there were, both in and out of the Committee of Secrecy, several persons who did not in the least yield to the member who spoke last, in point of honesty, and who, without derogating from his merit, were superior to him in the knowledge of the laws, but who at the same time were satisfied, that the charge specified in the eleventh article amounted to treason. The vote was agreed to by a majority of 247 to 147; and the rest of the articles being carried, Lord Coningsby and a great number of members went with the impeachment to the House of Lords. After an ineffectual attempt to adjourn the question, the Tory Lords moved that the Judges might be asked, whether the charge, in the

eleventh article amounted to high treason. In the course of the debate, Lord Cowper maintained the affirmative at some length, and challenged all the lawyers in England to disprove his arguments. Lord Nottingham represented to the Lords who made the motion, that instead of favouring thereby the noble person, who had the misfortune to be impeached, as undoubtedly they meant it, they might, on the contrary, do him a great prejudice; for if upon consulting the judges, they declared the charge to amount to treason, he would stand prejudged before he was brought to trial. The motion was then negatived on a division.

His speech in the House of Lords.

Upon the question that the Earl of Oxford be committed to safe custody in the Tower, Lord Oxford himself rose, and spoke in his own defence as follows: "My Lords; It is a "very great misfortune for any man to fall under the displea- "sure of so great and powerful a body as the Commons of "Great Britain; and this misfortune is the heavier upon me, "because I had the honour to be placed at the head of the "late ministry, and must now, it seems, be made accountable "for all the measures that were then pursued. But, on the "other hand, it is a very great comfort to me under this mis- "fortune, that I have the honour to be a member of this "august assembly; an assembly, which always squares their "proceedings and judgments by the rules of honour, justice, "and equity; and is not to be biassed by a spirit of party.

"My Lords; I could say a great deal to clear myself of "the charge which is brought against me; but as I now "labour under an indisposition of body, besides the fatigue "of this long sitting, I shall contract what I have to say in a "narrow compass. This whole accusation may, it seems, be

" reduced to the negotiation and conclusion of the peace. " That the nation wanted a peace, nobody will deny; and, I " hope it will be as easily made out, that the conditions of " this peace are as good as could be expected, considering " the circumstances wherein it was made, and the backward- " ness and reluctancy which some of the allies shewed to " come into the Queen's measures. This is certain, that this " peace, as bad as it is now represented, was approved by " two successive parliaments. It is, indeed, suggested against " this peace, that it was a separate one; but I hope, my " Lords, it will be made appear, that it was general; and that " it was France, and not Great Britain, that made the first " steps towards a negotiation. And, my Lords, I will be bold " to say, that during my whole administration, the sovereign " upon the throne was loved at home, and feared abroad.

" As to the business of Tournay, which is made a capital " charge, I can safely aver, that I had no manner of share in " it; and that the same was wholly transacted by that unfor- " tunate nobleman who thought fit to step aside; but I dare " say in his behalf, that if this charge could be proved, it " would not amount to treason. For my own part, as I " always acted by the immediate directions and commands of " the late Queen, and never offended against any known law, " I am justified in my own conscience, and unconcerned for " the life of an insignificant old man. But I cannot, without " the highest ingratitude, be unconcerned for the best of " Queens; a Queen who heaped upon me honours and pre- " ferments, though I never asked for them; and therefore I " think myself under an obligation to vindicate her memory, " and the measures she pursued, with my dying breath.

" My Lords; If ministers of state, acting by the immediate " commands of their sovereign, are afterwards to be made " accountable for their proceedings, it may one day or other, " be the case of all the members of this august assembly: I " do not doubt, therefore, that out of regard to yourselves, " your Lordships will give me an equitable hearing; and I hope " that, in the prosecution of this inquiry, it will appear, that " I have merited not only the indulgence, but likewise the " favour of the government.

" My Lords: I am now to take my leave of your Lordships, " and of this honourable House, perhaps for ever! I shall lay " down my life with pleasure, in a cause favoured by my late " dear royal mistress. And, when I consider that I am to be " judged by the justice, honour, and virtue of my peers, I " shall acquiesce, and retire with great content: and, my " Lords, God's will be done."

Lord Oxford, when he had finished his speech, was allowed to go to his own house, on account of indisposition. On his way home he was attended by a mob, who cried out, " High " Church, Ormond and Oxford for ever "!

The question, whether the accusation against Oxford, respecting Tournay, amounted to treason, is one of some interest and curiosity. Technically speaking, undoubtedly, a charge of assisting a power, with whom England was then at war, in obtaining possession of a town held by an ally, may be said to come within the statute of Edward the Third; but if we pass from the letter to the spirit of that law, the question to be asked is, whether Lord Oxford really intended to serve the French against his own country, or whether, he conceived the surrender of Tournay beneficial to the interests

of the crown and of the nation? And if this latter interpretation be adopted, which I think it ought to be, it must then be considered as a very unfair construction of the statute of treason, to impeach Lord Oxford of that crime. It has been said, that Walpole privately entertained an opinion against the proceeding, but for his honour it is to be hoped this report was false. On the next day, Lord Oxford was allowed a month to answer the articles of impeachment. Dr. Mead, one of his physicians, made an affidavit, that if the Earl was sent to the Tower, his life would be in danger; notwithstanding which it was voted that he should be sent to the Tower the following morning.

During the course of this debate, Lord Anglesey said, that it was to be feared these violent measures would make the sceptre shake in the King's hands. At these words, cries of "Order, Order," and "Tower, Tower," were heard in the House; and the Earl of Sutherland standing up said, "he trem-" bled with indignation to hear such words pronounced in that " noble assembly. That if they had been spoken any where " else, he would call the person who spoke them to an " account; but all that he could do there, was to move that " he might explain himself." The Earl of Sutherland was seconded by the Duke of Roxburgh, who among other things said, that the sceptre was so well rivetted in the King's hands, that instead of shaking, it would crush all his Majesty's enemies. Upon these, and some other speeches, Lord Anglesey replied, " that if he had been so unhappy, as by " any unguarded or passionate expression, to give offence to " that august assembly, he was very sorry for it." Notwithstanding this apology, some members were inclined to have

him sent to the Tower; but the words he had spoken not having been taken down in writing, his explanation was admitted.

He is sent to the Tower.

Lord Oxford was the next day carried to the Tower in his own carriage, followed by two hackney coaches, containing Lady Oxford, his son Lord Harley, and some others of his relations. They were followed by great numbers of the common people; and on the return of the carriages a tumult ensued, and three or four persons were carried by the constables to the round-house.

Lord Oxford did not give in his answer to the articles of impeachment till the 3rd of September. It consisted chiefly of a long and laboured defence of the peace of Utrecht from the censures which had been cast upon it. At the same time, an endeavour was made to prove that the Dutch had not been misled by any false representations on the part of the English ministry; and that the preliminaries, which had been signed with the French government, were not in truth the arrangements for a separate peace, but merely articles of agreement between the belligerent powers, intended to take effect only in the case of the conclusion of a general peace. Walpole attacked this answer with great warmth in the House of Commons, and a replication on the part of the Commons was carried up to the House of Lords.

The Duke of Ormond.

In the mean time the ministers had proceeded to other impeachments. The Duke of Ormond, who, as we have seen, entered during the latter part of the reign of Queen Anne into the cabals for bringing in the Pretender, rendered himself obnoxious to prosecution at this time by his imprudent and vain conduct. He affected to have his levee crowded

with people of rank; he countenanced the mob in crying Ormond for ever; he dispersed a printed paper to justify his conduct before he was attacked; and he endeavoured to excite an interest by spreading a report, that three persons in disguise, had stopt the Duchess of Ormond in her carriage, and seemed to have a design upon his life. Excited by these bravadoes, Secretary Stanhope on the 21st of June, moved an impeachment against him. The reputation of the Duke of Ormond for unsullied honour procured him warmer defenders than had appeared for Bolingbroke and Oxford; General Lumley in particular, reminded the House of his gallant behaviour at the battle of Landon, where he had been wounded, and adduced the testimony of King William in his behalf. He was supported by Sir J. Jekyll, who said, that "if there was room for mercy, he hoped it would be shewn to "that noble, generous, and courageous peer, who for many "years had exerted those accomplishments for the good of "his country." But his encouragement of the late riots was urged in reply, to all that could be said of his former conduct, and after a long debate, it was resolved to impeach him of high treason; but by a majority of no more than forty seven. Impeached.

It is said that at this moment Ormond wrote a submissive letter to the King, who agreed to give him a private audience; and it is probable, that with the general feeling in his favour, the impeachment would not have been persisted in, if he had consented to remain quiet; but instigated by an inordinate sense of his own importance, and the inflaming counsels of Bishop Atterbury and other Jacobites, he left England and immediately joined the Pretender. It is Joins the Pretender.

said, that before he went, he paid a visit to Lord Oxford to induce him to attempt his escape, but finding his arguments fruitless, he took leave of him in the words, "Farewell, Oxford, " without a head." To which Oxford replied, " Farewell, " Duke, without a duchy."

On the day following the impeachment of Ormond, the House of Commons, on the motion of Mr. Aislabie, agreed to impeach Lord Strafford of high crimes and misdemeanours. In the course of the debate, General Cadogan, speaking of the cessation of arms, said the confederates had thereby lost the fairest opportunity they ever had had, of destroying the enemy's army, and penetrating into the very heart of France. It should ever be kept in mind that the remembrance of the glory missed at that time, was deeply engraved in the hearts of the Whigs, and, more than any thing else, animated their present proceedings.

Riots. The prosecutions carrying on against the late ministers had served as a signal for riots in various parts of the country. In Staffordshire especially, a county long noted for its Tory politics, the mob assembled in great force, and destroyed some of the meeting-houses of the dissenters. In order to prevent the recurrence of similar excesses, an act was carried through Parliament, providing, that if persons, more than twelve in number, riotously, tumultuously, and unlawfully assembled, should remain together one hour, after proclamation made for them to disperse, they should be guilty of felony, without benefit of clergy. A short form of proclamation, to be read on such occasions, was laid down in the act.

Riot Act. The Riot Act (for so this law was named) is to be blamed solely for the severity of the penalty attached to an offence

which, according to circumstances, might be a very grave or a very slight one. In principle, there is no sound objection to be made to this statute. It did not prevent meetings of the people, or in any way restrain regular and peaceable assemblies, convened for the purpose of discussion and petition; it interfered with them only when they were riotous and tumultuous, and was therefore bottomed on the same ground as the policy adopted towards the press; namely, that of not interposing the arm of the state till a crime was actually committed. For it is clear, that a crowd which remains riotously assembled more than one hour, after proclamation made for them to disperse, must intend open rebellion, or at the least a defiance to the authority of the law. It is true that it is not easy to say where a lawful meeting ends, and an unlawful assembly begins; the decision of this point, however, must, in every case, whether this law had passed or not, have been left to the discretion of the magistrate, and could not be placed in any other hands. The Riot Act then was not, in principle, any encroachment on the liberty of the subject, and was in fact, more calculated to inspire a useful terror in disorderly mobs, than to produce either a tame servitude in the people, or a cruel vigour in the government. It was likewise in perfect conformity to the spirit of the ancient laws on this subject. In order to make it perfect, however, it would be requisite, 1st. That the penalty should be less severe; 2d. That a provision should be inserted for making the proclamation in a loud voice, and, if possible, in several parts of the crowd, so that it might be well heard and understood; 3rd. That in order to protect the people, it should be enacted that unless when some breach of the peace is committed, the crowd should not

be dispersed by force within the time mentioned by the proclamation, nor any person arrested within that time for the sole offence of being present at such meeting.

In practice the Riot Act has seldom or never produced any serious oppression, or violation of the rights of the subject. Indeed, the penalty has scarcely ever been enforced. In many cases, the mob has proceeded to acts of violence and outrage, which have called for more active interference, and in others the magistrates have dispersed the meeting, and arrested their ringleaders by military force, long before the time assigned by the law has elapsed. Where oppression or cruelty have taken place, it has been rather by the neglect, than by the strict use of the Riot Act.

Discontent of the people.

While legislative enactment was crushing the open expression of discontent, the ill humour of the people was too general to be suppressed by any law. The King had brought with him from Hanover, two mistresses; one of them named Mademoiselle Schulemburgh, afterwards made Duchess of Kendal, the other the Countess Platen. The general opinion was, that these women and other foreigners imported at the same time, were intent only upon robbing the treasury and palace of Great Britain of money and jewels. The crowd did not hesitate to express their suspicion and dislike on every opportunity. One day a German lady of the court, assaulted by these maledictions, as she was passing in the street, put her head out of the carriage window and cried out, "Why do "you abuse us, good people? We come for all your goods." One of the crowd answered in a voice equally loud, "Yes, "d—n you, and for all our chattels too."

Papers written in behalf of the Pretender, were at this time

circulated with great industry. One of these, written by Mr. Leslie, during the late reign, and printed this year, describes the Chevalier as tall, clean-limbed, and active in his person; resembling Charles the Second in countenance; candid, tolerant, and benevolent in his inclinations; just, firm, and considerate, in his principles.

Disaffection.

The disaffection of England to the new government was not long confined to the mobs of London and Staffordshire. The chief leaders of the Tory party seeing all hope of their ascendency destroyed, began to cabal, as many of them had done before the accession, in aid of the cause of the Pretender. But their anger against the House of Hanover was much stronger than their zeal for the House of Stuart, and they were much more inclined to drink the Pretender's health and preserve their estates, than fight for him and lose them. Scotland was in a very different state; there the recent memory of the Union; the insignificance to which that proud nation had been reduced; national animosity against the English, now confessedly their masters; and a strong attachment to the ancient clannish principle of hereditary right, combined to produce a lively feeling in favour of the exiled family. Accordingly during the last years of the Queen, the Pretender had seriously projected a descent in Scotland; and the gentlemen of the low country in the vicinity of the highlands, had carefully provided themselves with arms and a small quantity of ammunition, that they might be ready at the shortest warning to rise in support of the descendant of their ancient kings. Yet even in Scotland, opinion was much divided, and the majority was perhaps in favour of the new dynasty. The highlanders were attached to their chiefs, far more

than to any political cause whatsoever, and among the different clans, none was more numerous than that of the Campbells, led by Argyll, the natural enemy of the House of Stuart. Other chiefs, seduced by interest, or awed by force, likewise sided with the government. The lowlanders, with the exception of the gentry, seem to have taken part with the new establishment. The towns in particular were zealous for the House of Hanover, and the large body of the people had not forgotten the oppression they had suffered under the father and uncle of the present Pretender. Thus in England, especially among the country squires, and their tenantry, the Stuarts had the general feeling in their favour, but it was not zealous; in Scotland they were supported by a very zealous attachment, but it was not general..

Designs of the Jacobites. July 1715.

Such was the state of the affairs of the two kingdoms when about the beginning of July, a person sent by the chief Tories in England came to Lord Bolingbroke, then residing in Dauphiné. He represented that the people of England were so exasperated against the government, that far from wanting to be encouraged, they could not be restrained from insulting it on every occasion; that the whole Tory party had become avowedly Jacobite; that the army was disaffected; the city ready to rise; projects for seizing several places, ripe for execution; and the Duke of Ormond, assisted by the principal Tories at the head of the enterprize. The messenger added, that the friends of Bolingbroke had already engaged for him, and brought a letter from the Pretender himself, inviting his presence at Commercy.

Lord Bolingbroke sides

With no other information than this loose and exaggerated statement, Bolingbroke, who, on his first coming to France

had promised Lord Stair he would enter into no Jacobite engagement, now enlisted himself in the service of the Pretender. Not that he failed to perceive how much was wanting to form a reasonable inducement, "but the smart of an "attainder," as he himself says, "tingled in every vein, and I "looked on my party to be under oppression, and to call for "my assistance." When he arrived at Commercy, he found the Pretender in as complete ignorance as himself, with respect to the preparations which had been made for the success of his cause. All that appeared certain from England, was that the Duke of Ormond had asked for a small body of regular troops, a sum of money, and a quantity of arms and ammunition from the court of France, and that he had been told in answer, he must not expect any troops; but at the same time had been made to hope generally for some arms, and had received a small sum of money. The Scots, on the other hand, were quite ready to rise, and sent frequent messages to the Pretender to invite him to come among them, some of which were delivered in terms more zealous than respectful. In this situation of affairs, Bolingbroke advised that the Jacobites in the north should be restrained from rising, till those in the south were ready, and that in the mean time the utmost endeavours should be used to induce the King of France to espouse the cause. With the usual vehemence of his character, Bolingbroke himself accepted the seals, and with a view of urging the French court to active measures, repaired immediately to Paris. with the Pretender.

Here a new scene presented itself. A multitude of persons were zealously employed, but without subordination, order, or concert; they had worked up one another to believe success infallible, and mistook encouragements to act, for action

itself. "Care and hope," says Lord Bolingbroke, "sate on "every busy Irish face. Those who could write and read had "letters to shew, and those who had not arrived at this pitch "of erudition, had their secrets to whisper." A Mrs. Trant, a lady whose character was far from unblemished, was one of the chief persons in this spontaneous ministry. All the messages that were sent, all the information that was received, all the designs that were afloat, were carried from one little knot of people to another, and soon had a place in the dispatches of Lord Stair to the government of England.

In the midst of this bustle without preparation, and threats without performance, a person arrived from England with a paper which had been dictated by the Earl of Mar, and had passed through the hands of the Duke of Ormond, containing the unanimous sense of the principal persons engaged in the design. In this memorial it was stated, that there were no hopes of succeeding in an undertaking at that time, without an immediate and universal rising of the people in all parts of England upon the Chevalier's arrival; that such a rising could not be hoped for, unless he brought a body of regular troops with him; and that for this purpose twenty thousand men, five hundred officers, with their servants, and a train of artillery were required. The Chevalier was desired not to land before the end of September; the places of landing were to be pointed out in a future communication.

Upon a sight of this memorial, the French government refused to afford a body of troops, or to give any open and avowed succour to the Pretender, in contravention of the treaty of Utrecht. But they furnished money and allowed

Depine d'Anicaut to fit out a ship for the Chevalier himself at the expense of the King of France.* Nay it is not improbable that, with good management, France might have been drawn in to give the most active succours for an invasion of England; when of a sudden an event occurred which ought to have put a stop to the insurrection of the Jacobites, and about the same time this insurrection was rashly and improvidently begun. The event of which I speak was the death of Lewis the Fourteenth, which happened just at that point of time in the affairs of England, at which we are now arrived.

The death of Lewis the XIV. defeats his schemes.

Let us here pause for a moment to reflect on the occurrence of one of those happy hazards to which our liberty is so much indebted. It is the opinion of Lord Bolingbroke, that the disposition of Lewis the Fourteenth, and the violent jealousy of the Whigs, would soon have produced a renewal of the war between France and England. A French force landing with the Pretender at their head, would probably have received at this time the active support of the country gentlemen, a majority of whom had been the constant enemies of freedom from the accession of James the First; and would have been hailed by the acclamations of a mob, whose hatred of the Whigs and their principles, had been recently strengthened by their dislike to a foreign prince, ignorant of the manners and language of the country. On the other hand, the chief support of the House of Hanover, besides the Whigs and the trading interest, must have rested on the church and the army; but the church were alienated by seeing a party in power, which they thought favourable to the dissenters; and the army

* Letter to Wyndham.

may always receive a new direction from two or three interested or timid leaders. What might have been the issue of a bold and effective expedition to England at this time it is impossible to say, but it must be owned that her constitutional liberty never was in greater jeopardy.

At this critical moment, then, the death of Lewis the Fourteenth changed the whole complexion of the French court, and placed men in power, whose maxim it was to act in every respect contrary to the policy of the late king. The English government had likewise before this time taken the alarm.

July 20th, 1715. The King announced to Parliament the beginning of insurrection at home, with the expectation of invasion from abroad, and required the assistance of his faithful subjects. To comply with this call, the Habeas Corpus act was suspended; a measure which then, if ever, necessity justified; and nine new regiments were raised under officers faithful to the government.

Arrival of the Duke of Ormond in France. About the same time, the arrival of the Duke of Ormond in France convinced the French Court and people, of the weakness of the Jacobite party. It became as much the fashion of the courtiers to sneer at the cause of the Pretender, as it had lately been to cry it up. The English Jacobites themselves seem to have been confounded at the decease of their chief patron. In answer to a message from the Pretender, requiring a knowledge of their plans, they answered they could decide on nothing, till they knew the turn events would take upon the death of Lewis.

In this state of affairs, the Chevalier was beset afresh with earnest applications for his presence in Scotland; in answer to which, Lord Bolingbroke sent a message to Lord Mar that the sense of their friends was, that Scotland could do nothing

without the assistance of England; that England would not stir without assistance from abroad; that he might assure himself no such assistance was to be expected; and he was desired to make his own inference from these propositions. But before this message arrived, the Earl of Mar had already left London to draw the Highlanders to arms, incited by a private message, unknown to his principal advisers, from the Chevalier himself.* This conduct, it must be owned, proves the falsehood of the Pretender, and the folly of Lord Mar.

The Earl of Mar, who now placed himself at the head of the rebellion in Scotland, was a man of quick talents, of interested disposition, restless in his temper, inordinate in his ambition. His father had been suspected at the time of the revolution, of a disposition to favour King James, but had made his peace by delivering an important post which he held, into the hands of the new government. The son had been a zealous promoter of the union between England and Scotland, and had thereby incurred the lasting animosity of numbers of the Scottish nation. In the latter part of the Queen's reign, he had intrigued with the Court of St. Germain; but on the accession of King George, he addressed to his new sovereign a letter full of adulation, reminding him of his services at the Union, boasting that one of his ancestors had been intrusted with the care of the King's grandmother, and exalting his endeavours to keep things quiet and peaceable in Scotland. Finding, however, that his professions were disregarded, and that a place of five thousand a year, which he coveted, was not granted to him, he engaged actively in the intrigues then afoot in favour of the Pretender, and resolved

The Earl of Mar.

* Mem. de Berwick.

to commence a rebellion in Scotland. It has been conjectured by those who are not favourable to his character, that in this speculation, he did not ill consult his own personal advantage. In England, he was exposed every moment to be arrested, while in Scotland, he might stir up an insurrection, which if it succeeded, would conduct him to the highest honours and places, and if it failed, would probably leave him the means to make his escape to France, and become a prime counsellor in the mock-ministry of the Pretender.

Raises a rebellion in Scotland.

August, 1715

Be that as it may, however, the Earl of Mar about the 8th of August, 1715, embarked with Major-General Hamilton, Colonel Hay, and two servants, at Gravesend, on board a collier, and in a few days afterwards landed at Elie, in Fife. The adventurers immediately went to the house of John Bethune, of Balfour, a person known by the name of "the "Honest Laird." Lord Mar proceeded from thence to the house of the Laird of Invercald, where he framed his intrigues, and organised his preparations. On passing through Fife, some of the gentlemen of that county, having complained to him that government were about to deprive them of their arms, he advised them to gather in a body and rise; so lightly did he venture in this affair, and so far was he from the prudence and caution which such an enterprize required. After staying about eight days at Invercald, Lord Mar proceeded to Aboyne, where he met Lord Huntley, Lord Tullibardine, eldest son of the Duke of Athol; the Earl of Mareschal, the Earl of Southesk, Glengary, Glanderule, who was charged with a message from the Earl of Breadalbane, General Gordon, and some others. These persons held a consultation, and presently came to the resolution to rise in arms

without delay. They were induced to take this bold step by a promise of Lord Huntley, that he would join them, provided only his own time were granted him. In eight days more, the Earl of Mar collected about five hundred of his own men, and on the 6th of September, set up the standard of the Pretender at Brae-Mar. On the 9th, he issued a declaration, calling upon the people to take arms, and assuming the title of Lieutenant-General of the Pretender's forces, on the strength of a forged commission, which he had produced at Aboyne.*

Sept. 6th.

In the mean time the government had taken some decisive steps. By an act which received the royal assent on the 30th of August, the King was empowered to summon all the chiefs of the clans to Edinburgh, a measure, the policy of which may be justly questioned. Some of the chiefs indeed, taken on a sudden, proceeded to Edinburgh, but others seeing no time left for deliberation or compromise, beyond the few days allowed by the government, hastened to swell the ranks of the insurgents; others again, lingered till it was too late, and were obliged in despair to join the Earl of Mar.

Attempt to surprise the Castle of Edinburgh.

The first enterprise attempted by the insurgents, was the surprise of the Castle of Edinburgh. A serjeant and two soldiers belonging to the garrison having been gained, it was concerted that one of the soldiers, when posted as sentinel, should admit a party from the town. Half the town party, however, instead of arriving at nine in the evening, the time appointed, stayed drinking at a public house, and did not appear till near twelve. At this moment, the sentinel who had been gained, seeing the guard coming to relieve him, cried out to those below that they had ruined the whole,

* MS. in the possession of Lord Rosslyn.

and fired his piece. The guard came up, and the party of the rebels made off with the loss of two or three of their number. About the same time the Lord Justice Clerk, having received notice of their intentions, gave the alarm, and the plot was thus completely defeated.

While these things were going on in Scotland, the English government, upon receiving news of the rising in the Highlands, dispatched orders to Edinburgh for apprehending several suspected persons; pursuant to which, the Earls of Hume, Wigtoun, and Kinnoul, Lord Deskford, Mr. Lockhart of Carnwath, and Mr. Hume of Whitfield, were committed prisoners to the Castle. Major General Whetham, Commander-in-Chief in Scotland, was ordered to march with all the regular troops that could be spared, to form a camp near Stirling, to secure the bridge over the Forth. The Duke of Argyll was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Scotland, and Lord Sutherland was sent to raise the Highland clans in the part of the country which bears his name. Many other of the Scotch peers offered their services to King George.

Conspiracy in England.

While the government was thus employed, in quelling a rebellion in Scotland, they discovered a dangerous conspiracy in England. The titular Duke of Powis, a Roman Catholic, Lords Lansdown and Duplin were arrested, as implicated in this conspiracy, and a warrant was issued for the apprehension of the Earl of Jersey. At the same time a message from the King was sent to the House of Commons, informing them that his Majesty, having just cause to suspect that Sir William Wyndham, Sir John Packington, Mr. Edward Hervey, sen. Mr. Thomas Forster, jun. Mr. John Anstice, and Mr. Corbet Kynaston, were engaged in a design to support the intended

invasion of the kingdom, had given orders for apprehending them. Mr. Hervey and Mr. Anstice were immediately secured; Sir John Packington was examined and discharged; but Mr. Forster rose in rebellion in Northumberland; and Mr. Kynaston Corbet made his escape. The messenger sent to apprehend Sir William Wyndham at his house in Somersetshire, found him in bed; upon his coming out in his dressing-gown, he was immediately put under arrest, but getting leave from the officer to return and take leave of his lady, he escaped by a private door. Some important papers, however, were taken in his pockets, and a few days afterwards, Wyndham himself, finding it impossible to escape, went to the house of the Duke of Somerset, his father-in-law, and surrendered himself prisoner. The Duke of Somerset offered to be his bail, and upon his offer being refused, expressed himself so warmly, that for that reason, or upon that pretence, he was deprived of his office of Master of the Horse.

On the 21st of September, the King went down to both Houses, and made a speech, calling upon the nation for their support, and thanking the Parliament for the zeal and dispatch with which they had enabled him to make preparations necessary for the security of his government. He took notice that an attempt to persuade the people the Church of England was in danger, had been the main artifice employed to foment a rebellion, and expressed his indignation at so groundless and malicious a calumny. After this speech, the Parliament adjourned till the 6th of October, and afterwards by several adjournments to the 9th of January.

Let us now pursue the war in Scotland. It was with the Progress of

the rebellion in Scotland.

utmost difficulty that Mar had been able to induce the chiefs of the clans to persist in the proposed insurrection. When he had come down to Scotland he had represented England as already in rebellion, and France eager to pour her succours into the hands of the insurgents. The want of English intelligence had cast a shade upon these hopes, and the death of Lewis the Fourteenth had nearly induced the insurgents to abandon the whole enterprise. But Mar, by seasonable falsehoods, contrived to keep up the spirits of his colleagues; he represented the Regent as a young and active prince, likely to aid them with far more vigour than a king sunk in the weakness of old age; and he spread daily reports of the immediate arrival of the Duke of Berwick in Scotland, to be followed by the Chevalier himself. In vain did the more sober point out both the opposite interests of the Duke of Orleans, and the impolicy of relying on a force to be mainly composed of Highlanders; in a multitude where all are equal, the time and the mode of acting are generally determined by the rash and incapable, who give to prudence the name of timidity, and cast suspicions on the zeal and sincerity of all who are not as wrong-headed and ignorant as themselves.

Sept. 1715.

Soon after the proclamation of the Pretender at Brae-Mar, the insurgents were joined at Dunkeld by a considerable body under the Marquis of Tullibardine, and in a short time their force amounted to six or seven thousand men, including three squadrons of cavalry. But the composition of these forces was as crazy as their attempt was ill timed. The infantry consisted altogether of Highlanders, forming an irregular and untractable body, many of whom were not provided with flints to their guns by their commanders, in order to conceal a

lamentable deficiency of powder. One of the leaders remarked that he feared the Highlanders would desert their colours in three cases. 1st. If they were long without being brought to action, they would tire and go home. 2d. If they fought and were victorious, they would plunder and go home. 3d. If they fought and were beaten, they would run away and go home.* The cavalry of the army were, in the eye of an experienced soldier, not much more effective. They consisted entirely of gentlemen and their immediate dependents in the counties of Perth, Fife, and Angus. Accustomed to boast over their cups of the great deeds they would perform, they were brave in words, extravagant in their hopes, credulous of all favourable falsehoods, impatient of discipline, eager to meet their enemies in the field, but ignorant of all the other dangers and duties which belong to the profession of a soldier. When they marched, they took up their quarters where they liked, every man providing himself with a bed where he best could, and some straying several miles from their squadron, to visit their families in the neighbourhood. When any command was to be given, all were ready to speak, none to obey. Let us add to this, that they were but imperfectly understood by their highland companions in arms, and that this little camp was distracted by as many jealousies respecting commissions and precedencies, as the court of Lewis the Fourteenth. What is far more singular, is, that the insurgents were not provided with officers from France, of known experience and fidelity; indeed many of their troops were led by bankrupts and swindlers, men anxious to wipe off by mili-

State of the insurgent army.

* MS. in the possession of Lord Rosslyn.

tary success, the stain of their civil life, or to leave their country with honour, when they could not stay in it but with misery.*

Insurgents divide their forces.

Yet with this ineffective force something might have been done, if the chiefs had possessed talent and resolution. It is a maxim sanctioned by Francis Sforza and Lewis the Eleventh, that when a prince is attacked by a confederacy of his powerful subjects, the best policy he can pursue is to avoid a battle, and let his enemies waste themselves in inaction by disputes and jealousies. If this maxim is correct, it follows that the interest of an insurgent army is diametrically the opposite. The Duke of Argyll had scarce fifteen hundred men under his command; the Highlanders were ready to fight any force to which they might be opposed; a victory would have afforded to the insurgents the means of future success, and an encouragement to distant friends. Some action of acknowledged brilliancy was necessary to them, both to cover the rashness of the original design, and to restrain the Lowland Covenanters, who, it was plain, would never join in an attempt to place the crown on the head of a Stuart. But the Earl of Mar was not a military genius, and General Hamilton had more the talents of a tactician, than those of a party chief. Hence these leaders adopted the timid and unwise plan of breaking their force into detachments, and splitting the eight or ten thousand men they could raise, into expeditions, while the main force remained stationary. With a loss both of strength and of time, the body under General Gordon was sent into the West Highlands; another was

* MS. In the possession of Lord Rosslyn.

moved across the Firth of Forth to raise their Lowland friends, and annoy the rear of the royal army.*

Yet, though ill-directed, and often ill-conducted, the first operations of the insurgents shewed vigour and courage. A small force under Colonel Hay was sent against Perth, and by the assistance of the Jacobite burghers, got possession of that important town. Intelligence being received that a skipper was in the harbour of Burntisland laden with arms, a detachment under Mr. Sinclair was despatched there, and succeeded in possessing itself both of the town and of the ship, which last contained, however, only three hundred muskets. The force ordered to pass the Firth consisted of two thousand five hundred men. The straight was guarded, it was supposed effectually, by English frigates, but in spite of all their vigilance eleven hundred men crossed over, and landed in the neighbourhood of Haddington; the rest were driven back or dispersed, with the exception of Lord Strathmore, who was forced into the Isle of May, where with three hundred men he defended himself most gallantly for several days against the English ships, and then rejoined his friends. Brigadier Mackintosh, who commanded this expedition, took possession of the citadel of Leith, and threw great alarm into Edinburgh. Argyll, at the earnest request of the magistrates of that town, came from Stirling with some horse and mounted infantry, but finding the fort too strong to carry by assault against a superior force, he remained quiet. The insurgents drew off to Seaton House, which they began to fortify. Here Argyll prepared to besiege them, when he received intelli-

* The opinion expressed above, is ratified and confirmed by the sensible and cool-headed Marshal Berwick. See his Memoirs, t. ii.

gence that Mar was marching upon Stirling; on which he broke up and hastened back to meet the enemy; but Mar, whose movement was only a feint to save his friends, retired, and both armies resumed their positions. Mackintosh relieved by this manœuvre, left Seaton House, and marched toward Kelso, where he joined the English rebels. Of their joint operations I shall speak presently. In the mean time let us follow the operations of Lord Mar.

In their advance towards Stirling, the rebel force had, as usual, been very deficient in discipline. At Dumblain, their horse had taken two hours to dismount, and if an enemy had appeared, they would have been as long before they were in readiness to receive him.* The royalists took advantage of this negligence in a march the insurgents made towards Dunfermline: Colonel Cathcart coming up with a party of horse, rode into the town were they were quartered, and seizing all who ran into the streets, made prisoners seventeen persons, nearly all of them gentlemen; he then rode quietly off towards Stirling, and was already at a distance before the rebels, who imagined the whole English army had attacked them, ventured to leave the houses in which they were lodged.

Huntley at length arrived with his long promised succour. It consisted of fifteen hundred infantry, and two squadrons of cavalry. The infantry was composed of stout and valiant Highlanders; the cavalry, formed of large bulky men mounted on little horses, their Highland bonnets on their heads, and their rusty muskets hanging at their backs, without either boots or pistols, excited, under the title of light horse, the

* MS. in the possession of Lord Rosslyn.

derision of the rebel army. Yet they were Highlanders of the same frame and the same courage with the infantry; nothing but circumstances and a name made the one body ridiculous while the other was respected.

Advance of Mar.

With this additional force, though still deprived of the clans who had marched with General Gordon to the western Highlands, the Earl of Mar resolved to move forward against the enemy. The Duke of Argyle, upon intelligence of his march, determined to advance, and instead of meeting the rebels at the passes of the Forth, where his cavalry would be of no service, to pass the river and encounter them on the plain. Yet by so doing he exposed himself to the disadvantage of fighting with a river in his rear.

The two armies approached each other in the evening of the 11th of November. The insurgents hearing of the advance of Argyll, and afraid to continue their march, halted in a hollow, where they remained in a disadvantageous position the whole night. In the morning they ascended the hill above them, and immediately beheld on a rising ground at a mile's distance a large body of cavalry, which Argyll in person had led out to reconnoitre their position. Upon this the Earl of Mar ordered all the chiefs to assemble in the middle of his army, and made them an eloquent speech, in which he painted the wrongs of their Prince and their country, and congratulated them that the day was at length come to revenge their injuries in open battle. Huntley alone raised some objections to engaging; the rest drowned his opinion in the shouts of "fight, fight!" and galloped off to their different posts.*

Battle of Sheriff-Muir.

The army of Argyll consisted of about three thousand

* Ibid.

November 12th. five hundred men, including three regiments of cavalry; the rebel force was calculated by their enemies at nine thousand, but did not exceed eight. The right of the insurgents was commanded by Lord Drummond; General Hamilton seems to have acted as chief of the staff. Their army formed in line with a rapidity and decision which would have done honour to veterans, but by some accident three squadrons of horse posted on the left, misled by a cry from the Highlanders of " horse to the right," forsook the position in which they had been placed, and took ground on the right. This accident had an unfortunate influence on their fortune.

The Duke of Argyll, upon seeing the disposition of the enemy, was afraid of being outflanked, and changed the order of his troops. While this manœuvre was performing, the Highlanders on the right of Mar's army rushed upon the English infantry who were not yet formed; their furious and compact charge seemed about to overwhelm all resistance, when in the onset the Captain of Clanronald was killed, and his clan for a moment seemed to hesitate. At this instant, Glengary throwing his bonnet into the air, cried " Revenge! " Revenge! Revenge to day and mourning to-morrow!" Roused at his voice and bidding, the Highlanders again ran forward to the muzzles of the muskets of the infantry, and pushing aside the bayonets of the English with their targets, attacked them with their broadswords and drove them from the field. The conquerors instantly with loud shouts pursued their advantage, and were followed by a body of the insurgent cavalry, who neglecting the centre to which they were opposed, charged without orders to complete the victory of the Highlanders. After some pursuit they all returned

to the main body. In the mean time Argyll had attacked the left of Mar's army with his cavalry; a marsh which was usually impassable had been frozen in the night, and enabled him to charge them at once in front and flank: the Highlanders not yet in perfect order, and deprived of their cavalry, turned and gave way. Argyll pursued them two miles to the borders of the river Allan, in the course of which they frequently formed and made head against their pursuers. When Argyll arrived at the border of the river he found the enemy in such numbers, that he supposed their whole army to be there, and sent orders to the troops he had left behind to hasten their march in his support, that he might complete the victory. But General Weightman, to whom these orders were given, seeing a large body of the enemy's army still upon the hill, advanced slowly and cautiously to assist his general. Upon receiving this information, Argyll stopped the pursuit, and returned towards Dumblain. On his march he perceived the bulk of the insurgent army formed upon the hill, but no attempt was made to molest him, and he quietly drew off round the hill, and lay that night with his army at Dumblain. This inaction of the rebels at a critical moment has been greatly blamed. A Highland officer, who was watching the march of Argyll round the hill, stung with the sight, could not help exclaiming, "Oh! for an hour of Vis-"count Dundee!" The Earl of Mar, who was far from resembling Dundee, drew off on his side to Ardoch. The next morning the royalists took possession of the field, where they found the greater part of the cannon of the insurgents.

The loss on the two sides was pretty equally balanced. The insurgents were said to have lost eight hundred men in

killed, wounded, and prisoners, and the royalists six hundred. The subsequent loss of the rebels was much greater.

The battle of Dumblain, or Sheriff-Muir, resembles more one of those combats of the middle ages, in which the opposite armies rushed on each other with desperate but undirected courage, than the scientific actions of modern times. Argyll perhaps ought not to have given battle; the castles of Stirling and Edinburgh were in his possession; the people of the towns were all well affected; his force was unequal to that of the enemy, and large reinforcements were marching to his assistance. In the battle itself, his attaching himself to one wing and pursuing his advantage with them, made him lose sight of the rest of his army, though his whole force was small, and the field not extensive. On the other hand, the Earl of Mar appears to have been utterly wanting in military talent, and to have been quite incapable of taking advantage of the success which the spontaneous gallantry of his Highlanders had procured for him.

The battle of Sheriff-Muir left undecided the fortune of the war. Argyll retired to Stirling, and Mar to Perth, both boasting, and without falsehood, of the advantages they had gained. But events which had occurred in other parts, and the internal state of the insurgent army, solved the question which the battle had left at issue. Let us first turn to the fate of the English insurgents, and the detachment of Mackintosh.

Events in England.

The early preparations of the government, and the arrest of the principal conspirators, had totally paralyzed the plots of the Jacobites in England. The Duke of Ormond, upon landing near Plymouth, was unable to procure a night's

lodging in a country to which he came to command an army; and was obliged to consult his safety by an immediate return to France. On a second attempt, which seems to have been undertaken without any chance of success, he was, fortunately for himself, driven back to the French coast by a storm. In the mean time some persons who met at Bath, to concert an enterprize upon Bristol, were arrested or dispersed by the vigilance of the Lord Lieutenant of the county. Oxford was supposed to be peculiarly disaffected; a letter from a student, which was intercepted, boasted that they "drank James's health there "every day." Major General Pepper being ordered there to arrest some persons accused of treason, entered the town early in the morning and securing the gates, sent to the Vice-Chancellor, to desire that the accused might be given up to him. The Vice-Chancellor, who a few days before had addressed a flowing compliment to the Earl of Arran, lately elected Chancellor, in the room of his brother the Duke of Ormond, upon the virtues of the house of Butler, now spoke in a tone of submission and protestation. General Pepper, in his answer, desired that he would keep all the fellows and students in their colleges: this was complied with, and several of those whom he came to seek were arrested, but some got into one of the colleges and escaped.

Insurrection in the North. October.

The west, the midland, and southern parts of England, were thus easily freed from insurrection; in the north the Jacobites made a more vigorous attempt. The Earl of Derwentwater, a young nobleman of distinguished bravery and popular character, romantically attached to the cause of the Pretender, joined Lord Widdrington and Mr. Forster, and raised the standard of the Pretender at Warkworth, Mor-

peth, and Alnwick. Their troops consisting entirely of cavalry, they applied to the Earl of Mar for a reinforcement of infantry. This request was complied with, by sending Mackintosh across the Firth: the English insurgents, after failing in an attempt on Newcastle, effected a junction with him at Kelso. On their march they were joined by the Earls of Carnwath and Wintoun, and Viscount Kenmure.

A council of war was now held to deliberate on their future movements. The Earl of Wintoun proposed to march towards the west of Scotland, to join General Gordon, and combine with Mar in pressing the Duke of Argyll with all their forces. With this proposal, however, the English gentry refused to comply, and urged in their turn, the propriety of attacking General Carpenter, who had been sent with only nine hundred cavalry to suppress the rebellion in Northumberland. But this scheme was as little palateable to the Scotch, as the former had been to the English. In the end, neither plan was adopted, and it was determined to march into Lancashire, where they hoped to be joined by a large body of Roman Catholics. In executing this plan, however, they lost half their Highlanders, who, disgusted at the prospect of going into England, dispersed, and found their way home.

Rebels march to Preston.

The rebels directed their march under the conduct of Forster, who had received a commission from Mar, by Penrith, Kendal, and Lancaster, to Preston. At Kendal, twelve thousand of the posse comitatus, who had been assembled by Lord Lonsdale, the chief of an old Whig family, were seized with terror at the approach of the enemy, and, as might have been expected from that obsolete force, fled in all direc-

tions. The rebels had scarcely arrived at Preston, having received on the way some accession of strength, when they were informed that General Wills, with six regiments of cavalry, and a battalion of infantry, was preparing to invest the town. In his march, General Wills was obliged to pass the bridge of Ribble, the only approach to which was by a long narrow lane, where it is said that Cromwell, in an engagement with the royalists, was nearly killed by a large fragment of rock thrown from above, and only escaped by forcing his horse into a quicksand. The rebels however on this occasion, from ignorance or apprehension, abandoned the pass, and reserved their strength for the defence of the town of Preston. For one day they made a very effectual resistance, and the English were obliged to retire from the attack with some loss. But on the following day it being rumoured that General Carpenter had arrived with reinforcements, the insurgents resolved to treat, and sent Lord Derwentwater and Colonel Mackintosh as hostages, during the negotiation. Mackintosh ventured to say that he did not know if his Scots could be brought to submission on the terms proposed, upon which General Wills told him, that unless they did so, every man of them should be put to the sword. This threat produced a speedy conclusion. Fifteen hundred men surrendered at discretion; among them were seventy-five English, and one hundred and forty-three Scots noblemen and gentlemen.*

Nov. 12th.

They surrender at discretion. Nov. 14th.

While the affairs of the Pretender in England wore so grave an aspect, the hope of succours from abroad, which had been the foundation of the whole enterprize, proved

Intrigues in France.

* Tindal. State Trials, vol. xv.

equally fallacious. The object of the Duke of Orleans was to secure the crown of France, in case of the death of the young king; for this purpose, an alliance with King George was far preferable to a confederacy with an outlawed Prince. Impressed with this view of his situation, the Regent held fast by the treaty of Utrecht, and declined giving any efficient support to the cause of the Pretender. It is true, that partly owing to the irresolution of the Regent's character, and partly to the love of an intriguing, oblique, and faithless policy, which marked all French statesmen of this time, hopes were from time to time held forth, and succours drop by drop sparingly allowed to the Jacobites, either to satisfy the increasing importunity of their agents, or from the pleasure of seeing an ancient and successful rival torn by intestine war. At one time ships were allowed to be laden with ammunition at Havre, destined for the insurgent army; at another, arms were taken out of the magazines, professedly for the service of the Pretender, and said to be lodged at Compiegne; the Duke of Ormond first, and afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, were allowed to carry on an intercourse with the Regent, by means of Mrs. Trant and Mademoiselle de Chausseraye, whose house was a rendezvous for political intrigue. But all these demonstrations led to nothing; on a remonstrance from Admiral Byng, the stores embarked at Havre were landed and placed in the government magazines; the arms said to be lodged at Compiegne never were forthcoming; and the Regent cut short the intercourse through Mrs. Trant, by expressing his dislike of such a mode of communication. When Sir John Areskine arrived from Scotland to press for succour, the Regent, it is true, consented to see him, but he

obtained nothing more than a part of the money which had been sent from Spain to Lewis the Fourteenth for the purpose; this supply was afterwards lost with the vessel on the Scottish coast. Upon the whole, it became quite evident to Bolingbroke and Berwick, that no assistance of any consequence was to be expected from France.

Yet in this state of his affairs did the Chevalier resolve to put in execution the plan of repairing to Scotland, and taking the command of his army. To this singular determination he was impelled by his counsellors in exile, who could not bear to hear the taunts on his courage current at the French court; and who listened with some credulity to the loud professions there made of a readiness to acknowledge the Pretender, if he could once maintain himself in Scotland in the character of King.*

Upon the news of the insurrection of Mar, the Pretender had gone from Lorraine to St. Maloes; after being detained there for some time, he sailed from Dunkirk, and landed at Peterhead towards the end of December. He was accompanied by the Marquis of Tynemouth, son of the Duke of Berwick, and five other gentlemen.

Landing of the Pretender.

December

When the Chevalier arrived in this manner in Scotland, his affairs were in the worst possible situation. The army which had fought at Dumblain, although not defeated, had lost five of the eight thousand men of which it had consisted, on the following day, by desertion; and those who remained, destitute of powder and provisions, had made a disorderly retreat to Perth. When there, as is usual with inactive insurgents, the various chiefs broke forth in animo-

* Letter to Wyndham.

sities and cabals. A tumultous camp led by an old courtier could hardly flourish; many proposed to make an accommodation with the enemy, none had any confidence in the genius of their commander, who utterly neglecting every military precaution, wasted his time in writing letters on every side, and spreading false reports of succours to be received from France, or victories gained by their companions in England. To complete the misfortunes of the rebels, Sir John Mackenzie, after a gallant defence, was obliged to abandon Inverness, to Simon Frazer, Lord Lovat, who had joined the Earl of Sutherland,* while Huntley and Seaforth retiring to their own possessions, entered into negotiations with the government. Mar himself, discouraged by the state of affairs, and having little more than a thousand foot and four hundred horse under his command, attempted to obtain terms, through the Countess of Murray, from her nephew the Duke of Argyll. Argyll, replied at first, that he had no powers to treat; but upon a second overture, he made answer that he had sent for instructions, and would inform the Earl of Mar as soon as he had received his powers.†

In this state of things, the Pretender arrived at Peterhead. He passed through Aberdeen in the disguise of a naval officer, to Fetterosse, where he was met by the Earls of Mar and Mareschal, and about thirty noblemen and gentlemen; from
Jan. 7th. 1716. thence he went to Scone, where he proposed to stay till the ceremony of his coronation should be performed. He there

* It is a strong proof that the clannish principle was the only motive of the Highlanders in this rebellion, that the Frazers who had followed a younger branch of the family to Mar's standard, no sooner found that the chief was on the other side, than they deserted in a body to the royal army.

† MS. in the possession of Lord Rosslyn.

formed a regular council, and published six proclamations; One for a general thanksgiving on account of his safe arrival; another enjoining the ministers to pray for him in churches; a third establishing the currency of foreign coins; a fourth summoning the meeting of the convention of estates; a fifth ordering all fensible men to repair to his standard; and a sixth fixing the twenty-third day of January for his coronation. He likewise made a spirited speech to his followers, informing them, he was come to defend his rights, and calling upon them to stand by him. At the same time, however, it was privately determined to abandon the enterprize. The want of numbers, and the impossibility of subsisting in the Highlands, even with so small a number, were quite sufficient reasons for this determination.

Dispersion of the Rebels.

The Duke of Argyll having now received the reinforcement of the Dutch auxiliaries, was posted with three or four times the number of the insurgents at Stirling. By taking possession of Burnt-Island, with a detachment of Dutch troops, he had cut off the communications of the rebels with Fife. Nevertheless, he was strongly reproached with delay and inactivity by General Cadogan, who now arrived from England. Indeed, it seems probable that Argyll, from what motive it is impossible to say, wished to spare the rebels, and give them fairer terms than they were entitled to expect. General Cadogan openly accused him of want of zeal, and forced him by his remonstrances, to march against the Pretender. On the 29th of January, notwithstanding a prodigious fall of snow, the royal troops marched towards Perth, which was immediately abandoned by the rebels.* Jan. 29th.

* Cadogan says, in a letter to the Duke of Marlborough—"The Duke of

The Pretender finding himself hotly pursued, embarked on board a small French ship that lay in the harbour at Montrose, accompanied by the Earls of Mar and Melford, and Lord Drummond. The ship stretched over to Norway, and coasting along the German and Dutch shores, arrived in five days at Gravelines. The rest of the rebel force, which was left under the command of General Gordon, retired to Aberdeen, where the chief part of the officers embarked for France. The Highlanders fell back into the mountains of Badenoch, and before the English could come up with them, were entirely dispersed. The Duke of Argyll was recalled by the English government, and soon after deprived of all his offices.

If we reflect a moment on this ill-fated expedition, it will be seen that though badly planned and miserably conducted,

" Argyll grows so intolerably uneasy, that it is almost impossible to live with him " any longer; he is enraged at the success of the expedition, though he and his " creatures attribute to themselves the honour of it. When I brought him the " news of the rebels having ran from Perth, he seemed thunderstruck, and was " so visibly concerned, that even the foreign officers that were in the room took " notice of it." There is a passage in Bolingbroke's letter to Wyndham, which seems to countenance the suspicions here thrown out. " The Earl of Mar knows " that all the powder in France could not have enabled him to stay at Perth so " long as he did, if he had not had another security; and when that failed him " he must have quitted the party, if the Regent had given us all he had made " some of us expect," p. 237. Cadogan in a subsequent part of his letter says, " Since the rebels quitting Perth, he (Argyll) has sent for five or six hundred of " his Argyllshire men, who go before the army a day's march, to take possession " of the towns the enemy have abandoned, and to plunder and destroy the " country, which enrages our soldiers, who are forbid under pain of death to take " the value of a farthing, though out of the rebels houses. Not one of these " Argyll men appeared whilst the rebels were in Perth, and when they might " have been of some use." Coxe's Marlborough, vol. iii. p. 612.

the want of success is chiefly to be attributed to the prudent quiet of the English Jacobites. Nor can this inactivity well be accounted for on any other supposition than this, that they were not hearty in their attachment to the exiled family. That they would gladly have seen a French army drive George the First from his throne, there can be little doubt; but there seems to have been a total absence of that spirit which, in the preceding century, had rallied the brave cavaliers round the standard of Charles the First. Whether this indifference is most to be attributed to the Roman Catholic faith of the Pretender, or to the security of person and property enjoyed under the government of the Revolution, I will not decide. But these two seem to be the principal causes of the distinction to be observed between the two periods. In the former instance, the nobility and gentry of England resisted a government which overturned the church, and seemed likely to shake all the ancient institutions in the kingdom. In the latter case, they were called upon to rise against an establishment which protected their persons and their properties, in favour of a prince whose religion they disliked, and with whose character they were unacquainted. In the former instance, doubt and fear induced them to rush to arms; in the latter, the same motives prevailed upon them to remain quiet.

In the course of this attempt, the Pretender proved himself to be utterly destitute of the great qualities, for which his partizans had given him credit. Without any enlarged views either of politics or of morality, he was swayed in all his actions by the maxims of priests, at once ignorant of the world, and learned in duplicity. By their advice he declined

to sign a declaration, promising a full security to the church of England, because it was against his conscience; yet he consented to sign the same declaration when certain words had been altered, so that he might afterwards appeal to the letter, against the spirit of his promise.* So meanly equivocating was the character of this unfortunate Prince!

Impeachment of the Rebel Lords. Jan. 1716.

The next thing to be related, is the punishment of such of the rebels as had been taken in arms. For this purpose, in the beginning of January, Mr. Lechmere, after a speech of some length, moved to impeach Lords Derwentwater, Widdrington, Nithisdale, Wintoun, Carnwath, Kenmure, and Nairn, of high treason. The same night the articles of impeachment were carried up to the Lords, and on the next day the accused were brought to the bar of the House. They all pleaded guilty, except the Earl of Wintoun, who had further time allowed him. On the 9th of February, the impeached Lords were again brought to the bar, when, after the articles of impeachment and their answers had been read, Lord Cowper, who acted as Lord High Steward, pronounced the sentence of the law, according to its ancient and barbarous form.

Great interest was made by their relations on behalf of the condemned lords, and the House of Peers even carried up an address to the King, praying that he would reprieve such of them as should deserve his mercy. The King replied, that he would do what he thought most consistent with the dignity of his crown, and the safety of his people. This resolute answer put an end to the hopes of the Jacobites. Lord Nottingham, who had supported the petitions in favour of the

* Letter to Wyndham.

condemned lords in the House of Peers, was a few days afterwards, together with Lord Aylesford, his brother, and Lord Finch, his son, removed from all his offices. Notwithstanding however this tone of severity, Lord Widdrington, Lord Carnwath, and Lord Nairn, were reprieved; the other three were ordered for execution; but Lord Nithisdale found means to escape from the Tower in disguise, the very night before the execution. The King, upon being told the next morning of his escape, said, "It was the best thing a man in his condi-"tion could have done."*

Execution of the Lords Derwentwater and Kenmure. Feb. 24th.

The Earl of Derwentwater and Viscount Kenmure were beheaded on Tower-Hill on the 24th of February. Lord Derwentwater, before he died, asked permission to read a paper, which was readily granted to him. In this paper, he declared that he repented of having pleaded guilty at his trial; "that he never owned any other but King James the "Third, for his rightful and lawful sovereign, whom he had "had an inclination to serve from his infancy, and that he "hoped his death might contribute to the service of his "King and country, and the re-establishment of the ancient "fundamental constitution of these kingdoms."* After reading this paper, he looked at the block, and finding a rough place in it, desired the executioner to chip it off. Upon a signal given, his head was taken off at one blow. Lord Kenmure was executed immediately after; he made no speech, and delivered no paper, but shortly after his death a letter was published, in which he maintained the title of "the person called the Pretender, whom he believed to be "the true son of James the Second."

* State Trials, vol. xv.

Lord Wintoun, after a trial of some length, was likewise condemned to death, but afterwards made his escape from the Tower.

Other executions.

In the beginning of April, a commission for trying the rebels met in the Court of Common Pleas, when bills of high treason were found against Mr. Forster, Mackintosh, and twenty of their confederates. Forster escaped from Newgate, and reached the continent in safety; some time afterwards, Mackintosh, and several other prisoners, likewise broke from prison, after having mastered the keeper and turnkey, and disarmed the centinel; some were retaken, but Mackintosh and seven others escaped. The court proceeded with the trials of those who remained; a great number were found guilty, and four or five were hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn. In Lancashire, two and twenty prisoners were executed; above a thousand submitted to the King's mercy, and prayed for transportation.

In 1717, an act of grace was passed by the King and two Houses of Parliament, by virtue of which, the Earl of Carnwath, Lords Widdrington, and Nairn, were delivered from the Tower: seventeen persons confined in Newgate; the prisoners in the castles of Lancaster and Carlisle, and those in the castles of Edinburgh and Stirling, including the Earl of Strathallan, and Lord Rollo, were likewise set free.

Such was the treatment of the persons found in arms in this rebellion. If we consider the object of the rebels, the blood which they spilt in their enterprize, and the necessity of securing the kingdom by some examples of severity from further disturbance, we shall probably be of opinion, that as much mercy was shewn, as was consistent with the safety

of the established government, and the vindication of the rights of the people.

Septennial Bill.

Although the rebellion was extinguished, the spirit which had blown the flame was far from having subsided. The Tory party, enraged at the prosecution of their leaders, and longing for revenge on their opponents, omitted no means to secure a majority at the next general election. A prevailing feeling of pity for the condemned lords, and admiration of the courage with which they had met their fate, were sentiments most favourable to these hopes, and every one perceived that the victory which had been gained in the field of battle, was to be won again upon the hustings. In this situation the Whig ministry took a bold resolution, which saved the liberties of the country, while it exposed their names to obloquy and reproach. This was no other than a determination to prolong the parliament beyond the period fixed by the triennial act, which had by their means been established. It is said, that at first, they meditated a suspension of the act for one election only. But it was thought that a permanent measure would have less the air of violating constitutional laws for a temporary necessity; and they resolved to extend the duration of Parliament to seven years.

April 10th.

The Duke of Devonshire, whose father had been one of the chief promoters of the triennial act, was the person who brought the septennial bill into the House of Lords. The preamble of the bill contained the two reasons upon which the bill was grounded. It stated in the first place, that the triennial act had proved "very grievous and burthen-" some, by occasioning much greater and more continued " expenses, in order to elections of members to serve in Par-

" liament, and more violent and lasting heats and animosi-
" ties among the subjects of this realm, than were ever known
" before the said clause was enacted:" and secondly it affirmed, that if it should continue, it might probably " at this
" juncture, when a restless and Popish faction are designing
" and endeavouring to renew the rebellion within this king-
" dom, and an invasion from abroad, be destructive to the
" peace and security of the government."

The Duke of Devonshire, on bringing in the bill, was supported by several peers, friends of the administration. On the day when the bill was read a second time, a debate arose upon the commitment; it was opposed by Lord Abingdon, Lord Poulett, Lord Trevor, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Ferrers, Lord Aylesford, Lord Peterborough, Lord Nottingham, and Lord Anglesea; in short, the whole strength of the Tory party. On the other hand, it was supported by the Duke of Argyll, Lord Dorset, Lord Carteret, Lord Cowper, and other peers attached to the ministry. On a division, the commitment was carried by ninety-six votes to sixty-one. There were other divisions, but the numbers on both sides were smaller.*

When the bill had passed the Lords, two of the judges were sent to carry it down to the House of Commons. Before the debate on the second reading, petitions against it were presented from the boroughs of Marlborough, Midhurst, Abingdon, Newcastle under Line, the town of Hastings, and the Corporation of Cambridge. Considering how much the

* It is to the last division of sixty-nine to thirty-six, that Mr. Coxe must have confined his attention, when he says that in the House of Lords there were only thirty-six voices against the bill. See his Life of Walpole.

boroughs were interested in frequent elections, it is astonishing no greater number of petitions should have been presented. The speakers on both sides included all the oratorical talent of the House; the principal of them, however, were Mr. Hampden, Mr. Molineaux, Sir Joseph Jekyll, Mr. Secretary Stanhope, for; Mr. Shippen, Mr. Bromley, Sir Thomas Hanmer, Lord Guernsey, and Mr. Lechmere against, the bill. Perhaps it may be interesting to see, in the shape in which they have been (however imperfectly) transmitted to us, a speech on each side of the question. For this purpose, I will select that of Sir Richard Steele, and that of Sir Robert Raymond, who was afterwards Chief Justice of the King's Bench.

Speech of Sir Richard Steele.

After some debate, Sir Richard Steele spoke to the following effect: "Mr. Speaker; It is evident that new-chosen "Annual Parliaments, were never the custom or right of this "kingdom: it remains therefore only to consider now that "there is a law, which makes new Parliaments meet at a cer- "tain stated time, whether the period of three years answers "the purposes intended by it? The preamble to the Trien- "nial act expresses, that it was introduced into the consitu- "tion, 'for the better union and agreement of the King and "'his people;' but in fact it has had a quite contrary effect; "and experience has verified, what a great man (the late "Earl of Sunderland) said of it, when it was enacted, 'That "'it had made a triennial king, a triennial ministry, a tri- "'ennial alliance.' We feel this in all occurrences of state; "and they who look upon us from abroad, behold with anxi- "ety and doubt, the struggle in which we are necessarily "engaged from time to time, under this law. Ever since it

" has been enacted, the nation has been in a series of conten-
" tion; the first year of a Triennial Parliament has been
" spent in vindictive decisions and animosities concerning the
" late elections; the second session has entered into business,
" but rather with a spirit of contradiction to what the prevail-
" ing set of men in former Parliaments had brought to pass,
" than of a disinterested zeal for the common good: the third
" session languished in the pursuit of what little was intended
" to be done in the second; and the approach of an ensuing
" election terrified the members into a servile management,
" according as their respective principals were disposed
" towards the question before them in the House. Thus the
" state of England has been like that of a vessel in distress
" at sea; the pilot and mariners have been wholly employed
" in keeping the ship from sinking; the art of navigation was
" useless, and they never pretended to make sail. It is ob-
" jected, ' That the alteration proposed is a breach of trust.'
" The trust, Sir, reposed in us, is that of the public good:
" the King, Lords, and Commons, are the parties who exer-
" cise this trust; and when the King, Lords, and Commons,
" exercise their trust by the measure of the common good,
" they discharge their duty, as well in the altering and repeal-
" ing, as in the making or confirming laws. It has been far-
" ther objected, ' That this is giving great power to the
" ' ministers, who may make an arbitrary use of it.' The
" ministers are indeed like other men, from the infirmity of
" human nature, liable to be made worse by power and autho-
" rity; but this act gives no addition to that authority itself;
" though it may possibly prolong the exercise of it in them.
" They are nevertheless responsible for their actions to a

" Parliament; and their mode of enjoying their offices is " exactly the same. Now, when this is the case, and the " period of three years is found, from infallible experience, a " period that can afford us no good, why should we retain it? " The ills that are to be done against single persons or com- " munities, are done by surprise, and on a sudden; but good " things are slow in their progress, and must wait occasion. " Destruction is done with a blow; but reformation is brought " about by leisurely advances. All the mischiefs which can " be wrought under the Septennial Act, can be perpetrated " under the Triennial; but all the good which may be com- " passed under the Septennial, cannot be hoped for under " the Triennial. We may fear that the ministers may do us " harm, but that is no reason why we should continue them " under a disability of doing us good."

Speech of Sir Robert Raymond.

Sir Robert Raymond, towards the close of the discussion, rose and said: " Mr. Speaker; I am very sensible under " what disadvantage I must speak, after so long a debate: I " will therefore endeavour to contract what occurs to me on " this subject. In what I have to offer, I will first consider " the arguments that have been used for this bill, and then " give my reasons why I am against it.

" The arguments for the bill are, I think, chiefly these; the " expences in elections; the animosities and divisions made " and continued by triennial elections; the advantages our " enemies may take of these animosities and divisions; and " the encouragement, that this bill will give to our allies to " enter into treaties, for our mutual benefit and advantage.

" As to the expences in elections, it must be acknowledged " that they are grown very scandalous, as well as grievous

" and burdensome to the gentlemen of England. They have " increased upon them, not from the contests of neigh- " bouring gentlemen with one another, but from strangers, " coming to their boroughs, who have no natural interest " to recommend them, and no other support but bribery " and corruption: this it is, which has put gentlemen under " the necessity of great expences to preserve their interests, " and serve their country. And you must give me leave to " add, that another cause has been, the impunity that bribery " and corruption have met with in this House, when they " have been very notorious, and very fully detected. But, " I fear, this bill can be no cure to that evil, and indeed " will rather increase it. An annuity for seven years, deserves " a better consideration than one for three; and those that " will give money to get into Parliament, will give more for " seven than for three years. Nothing will so effectually pre- " vent expenses as annual Parliaments; that was our ancient " constitution, and every departure from it, is usually at- " tended with great inconveniences.

" As for our animosities and divisions, I am sorry there are " any, but cannot believe this bill will be a remedy for them. " The animosities and divisions raised by elections are of a " private nature, and little affect the public; those that do, " are otherwise to be accounted for, and might have been " extinguished; but the opportunities have been neglected; " and I wish some persons have not studied rather to continue " and increase them, than to extinguish them. I will speak " plainly on this occasion; I think the greatest animosities " and divisions among us, have been owing to the unrea- " sonable resentments, avarice, and ambition of some, and to " the unaccountable folly and madness of others.

" That our enemies will take advantage of our divisions, " is not to be doubted, if it is in their power; but I must " observe, that since the Triennial Act passed, there have " been ten several Parliaments called, most of them when " you were actually in war; your animosities and divisions " great, and your enemies vigilant; yet no inconveniences " followed, nor were any foreign plots, as far as I have heard, " so much as attempted at the times of those elections.

" The last of the arguments I have recited, is the encou- " ragement this will give to your allies to enter into treaties " with you. No one says they want this encouragement; no " one says they ask it; so that I may conclude this is only a " pretence. I should be sorry we had such allies as would " not treat with his Majesty without our giving up our con- " stitution. But in reality, what you are now going to do, " instead of strengthening the King's hands, will, I am per- " suaded lessen him in the opinion of his allies: for this is " proclaiming to the world, that he dares not call a new Par- " liament; that he dares not trust the people in a new choice. " Besides, not daring to call a new Parliament, carries along " with it a supposition to the dishonour of the House: for it " supposes that another House of Commons would act differ- " ently from the present; which is to confess that this House " does not truly represent the people; that they and their " representatives are of different minds; and that if they " were to choose again, they would choose men of other prin- " ciples, of other sentiments.

" I will not trouble you farther with answers to the argu- " ments for this bill; those against it, that weigh most with " me, are these: That frequent new Parliaments are our

" constitution; that a long Parliament is plainly destructive " of the subject's just right, and many ways inconsistent with " the good of the nation. Is it reasonable any particular men " should for a long time engross so great a trust, exclusive of " others; can it be of advantage to the public, that the coun- " ties, cities, and boroughs, should be long confined to those " they have once chosen, their interests admitting of great " variation in length of time?"

After some remarks on the historical part of the subject, he continued: " I cannot entertain so unworthy a thought of this " House, that any gentlemen in it would at this time, in " direct terms, be for perpetuating themselves; yet if they " consent to this bill, I shall reckon they are doing it; for " though it only prolongs this Parliament for seven years, I " cannot doubt but hereafter there will be another for conti- " nuing it longer. I warn you likewise, that this alteration " in our laws and constitution, will certainly have a very " bad effect upon the minds of the people. For they will be " ready to say, and with reason, that after the expiration of " the three years, you are no longer their representatives, " because they chose you to serve them no longer. With " great submission I speak it; in my poor opinion, Kings, " Lords, and Commons, can no more continue a Parliament " beyond its natural duration, than they can make a Par- " liament. I know at extraordinary junctures, conventions " have been turned into Parliaments; but it has been " thought adviseable soon to determine them, and to pass " acts in the subsequent legal Parliaments, to confirm what " they have done. There is an instance in your statute- " book, where all the acts of a Parliament were declared

" void, and repealed, because the Parliament was unlawfully " summoned, and the members not duly chosen.

" I need not urge farther, that the wisest governments that " have preserved a face of liberty, have never continued long " in authority, those with whom they have intrusted the " supreme power. That a standing Parliament and a stand- " ing army are convertible, and only necessary to support one " another. And that there can be no occasion for this bill "-at this time, because this Parliament may have two more " sessions, if the King pleases. But as I have already taken " up so much of your time, I shall only add, that for the " reasons I have given, I am against committing this bill."*

On a division, there appeared two hundred and eighty-four for the bill, and one hundred and sixty-two against it. The bill was accordingly committed; and on the 26th of April was passed by a very large majority.

Review of the Arguments.

Summing up the arguments on the two sides, it may be said that the promoters of the Septennial Bill dwelt on the inconvenience which the country suffered by the frequent return of the expence and agitation attendant upon contested elections; the danger of another rebellion; the prospect of a Jacobite House of Commons, chosen in the actual state of public feeling; and the want of confidence on the part of foreign powers, owing to the instability of the government. The opponents of the bill, on the other hand, rested their arguments on the ancient right to frequent Parliaments; a right supposed to be claimed and exercised from the commencement of our Parliamentary history; asserted in the

* I have omitted in the report of this speech, the historical disquisition, part of which seems to be copied from a speech of Lord Shaftesbury.

reigns of Charles the First and Second; declared at the Revolution; and finally established by the Triennial Bill. They taunted their adversaries with the distrust of the people, which their measure betrayed; and maintained that frequent elections, were necessary to the purity and integrity of the House of Commons. Finally, they denied the power of Parliament to prolong their own existence.

Beginning with this last argument, I cannot but express my wonder that it should ever have imposed upon men of sound intellect. There could be no doubt that Parliament might, if it chose, repeal the Triennial Act, and in that case, the duration of Parliament might, according to former custom, have been extended during the whole of the King's reign. Nor does any one deny that the legislature might have made laws for the duration of the next Parliament; and according to those who propound the argument I am discussing, the people would then have been obliged to elect their representatives for ten or twenty years, without any remedy whatever. But to say that the supreme power could do those things, and yet has not the right to provide a remedy against a danger which threatened the very existence of the constitution, is evidently absurd.

On the other hand, the danger of the moment, though no doubt it was the chief motive of the Whigs for proposing the Septennial Bill, cannot be urged as a justification of a permanent measure of this kind. The crisis would have been passed over by suspending one election, and the people would then have returned to their rights, as they do to the right of personal security after the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

The measure must be tried then by its own merits upon the question, whether seven years is a better period for a representative assembly, than three? If the assembly truly represents the people, I own I should think the longer period preferable to the shorter. The object of a representative government, is to obtain an assembly, to check and controul the executive, in the name and on the behalf of the people. It is very desirable, undoubtedly, that the members of it should be obliged to justify the confidence reposed in them, by the necessity of returning for the renewal of their powers; but if the interval is made too short, instead of taking a large and extensive view of the whole interests of the government, they are forced to canvass the people on every particular question, and to yield to every gust of popular opinion. Thus the benefit of representative government is lost, and a select assembly becomes a no better instrument of deliberation than the populace of any large town. Perhaps indeed, seven years may be a period unnecessarily long, but I am inclined to think three inconveniently short.

Another reason for the Septennial Bill, is derived from the strength which it was calculated to give the House of Commons. An assembly which sits only for two or three years, will perpetually change its spirit, and no reliance can be placed on its wishes or resolutions. But a body which is convoked annually for six years together, becomes fit for the purposes of government; it learns to feel its own strength; and by help of the power of refusing supplies, soon finds itself able to controul every movement of the executive power. Indeed, this influence of the House of Commons, is by some considered as excessive and unconstitutional;

but I presume this argument is only used by those, who consider the constitution of the House of Commons so defective, as to make their interference in all cases an evil. Such an opinion does not appear to me to be well founded. It seems to me, that whatever may be the abuses which have crept into elections, there is yet so much of the popular element in the House of Commons, that the increase of their power must always be attended, to a certain degree, by the benefits which attend the controul of the people over the conduct of their government;—a more careful attention to interests, and some conformity to the enlightened opinion of the nation.

On the 26th of June, the Parliament was prorogued after a speech from the throne.

The events of the few years which we have gone over in this chapter, are of the greatest importance in the history of England. Three great changes may be said to have been made, if not in the constitution, yet in the mode of administering it; changes which some will think equally beneficial, others equally pernicious, but which all tended to the establishment of the kind of government under which we now live.

The first principle established at this time, is that of conducting the government by one party. During the reign of William the Third, and the greater part of that of Anne, the offices of state were divided between the members of the two parties, with a view to conciliate both, and to exclude the more haughty and presumptuous leaders, from acquiring a dictation over the sovereign. In the middle of the reign of Anne, the Whigs obtained something like exclusive power;

and towards the end of that reign the Tories possessed unbalanced authority; but their hesitation and misconduct totally deprived them of the confidence of the new King, and the Whigs found themselves strong enough to keep out their opponents for nearly half a century. From this time we may observe in the ministry of England, greater unity of views, a more complete confidence among the members of it, and a more uniform policy towards foreign powers. Government by one party.

The second change made at this time, was the transfer of the seat of power from the House of Lords to the House of Commons. During the two previous reigns, the house of commons was still kept in a dependent station, and the great peers of the governing parties, confided to their deputies the management of that assembly. Their complete emancipation from their former bondage, is attributed by Speaker Onslow to the Septennial Bill, which, as I have already said, was calculated to produce this effect. It may be objected, however, that the appearance of Walpole on the stage of politics, at the time when the great men of the reign of Queen Anne were retiring from it, is sufficient to account for the power which the Commons at this period acquired. But had the house of commons remained what it was, and Walpole obtained an equal ascendancy in the government, there can be little doubt that he would have been made a peer, and governed his party in the House of Lords in the place of the Duke of Newcastle. His continuing a commoner, when at the head of the ministry of England, is the test and the proof of the increased consequence of the assembly to which he belonged. Increased power of the House of Commons.

The greatest change of all, however, was the establishment New Title to the Crown.

of a dynasty grounded on a parliamentary title. As long as a Stuart was upon the throne, it seemed not improbable that the crown might revert to the elder branch of the family: the succession of the House of Hanover closed their prospect for ever. At the time when this great event happened, it is said that two hundred persons, with a preferable hereditary claim, were excluded; nor, when we consider that the Electress Sophia was the youngest daughter of the Elector Palatine, does this calculation appear much exaggerated. The advantage of this revolution to the cause of freedom cannot be too highly estimated. The old doctrine of the Tories always supposed that the King had a property in the prerogatives of the crown, independent of the consent and overbearing the interests of his people. But here was a King who had no other claim to his power, than that created by an act passed by the Lords and Commons of Great Britain. Consequently, the great modern charters of our liberty, the Habeas Corpus Act and the Bill of Rights, were at once lifted out of the debateable ground on which they stood, and placed by the side of the sovereign upon the throne; from this time resting on the same foundation, and exposed to no other dangers than those which equally menaced the existence of the dynasty. With such a protection, the laws which secure the personal freedom of Englishmen had time to take deep root in the country; and when, half a century afterwards, the Tories were restored to power, they found our liberties guarded not only by the zeal of a party, but by the veneration of a people. Nay, in the course of this half century, the ideas of the Tories themselves were changed, and instead of a legitimate king, and an uncurbed prerogative,

they became satisfied with a title granted, and a government controlled by parliament.

Before I quit the subject of English affairs, I cannot omit the mention of three remarkable men, who died soon after the accession of the House of Hanover.

Character of Bishop Burnet.

In March, 1715, died Bishop Burnet, in the 72nd year of his age. He preserved his senses to the last; when informed of his danger, he behaved with the utmost calmness, and spent his last hours in acts of devotion, and in giving affectionate advice to his family. Bishop Burnet has had many enemies; his party zeal and inquisitive temper made him obnoxious to many of his cotemporaries; and the curious eye of posterity has discovered, in a long life, errors which he was too imprudent to avoid, and too vain to conceal. But above all, he exposed himself to envy by his independence and disinterestedness, qualities which, rare as they are among mankind, are peculiarly uncommon in the body to which he belonged. "His indifference for preferment," says Lord Halifax, "his contempt not only of splendour, but "of all unnecessary plenty, his degrading himself into the "lowest and most painful duties of his calling, are such unpre- "latical qualities, that let him be never so orthodox in other "things, in these he must be a dissenter."* Burnet deserves our respect for having sacrificed his fortune to his political opinions: in the reign of Charles the Second he refused to concur in the measures of that Prince, although offered the bishoprick of Chichester as the price of his compliance; and rather than submit to the violent tyranny of his successor, he cheerfully underwent the pains of exile and proscription.

* Character of Burnet. By Lord Halifax.

This honest conduct, admirable in any cause, deserves our respect still more, as no disgrace would have been incurred by embracing the opposite side. In the office of bishop, he was zealous, active, intelligent, and charitable. He looked upon himself, with regard to his episcopal revenue, as a trustee for the church, bound to expend the whole in the maintenance of a figure suitable to his station, in hospitality, and in acts of charity. So faithfully did he perform this trust, that at his death, no more of his episcopal revenues was left than was sufficient to pay his debts.* At the same time he was an affectionate husband, and a most kind father. On the other side of the account, it must be owned that he was a prejudiced politician; and that his curiosity to get at the bottom of all state affairs, often exposed him to the ridicule of those, who would gladly have accused him of worse faults.

The History of his Own Times, which Burnet left behind him, is a work of great instruction and amusement, and the more interesting, as he seems to have relied almost entirely on his memory, and very little on the public relations of the events he relates. We thus have the impression of what was passing, as he received it from conversation and general opinion, instead of a mere detail of facts gleaned from the Gazette, and drawn upon the canvas without colour or perspective. That this method, together with his ignorance of parliamentary forms, has led him into some errors, it would be absurd to deny, but these faults do not detract from the general usefulness of his work. Philippe de Comines is so far mistaken in his facts, as to attribute an event to circum-

* Life, prefixed to his works.

stances which followed, instead of preceding it; yet no one doubts the general accuracy and fidelity of his memoirs. The characters of Burnet, it must be added, are not to be relied upon so much as his narrative; he had many dislikes, and takes no pains to overcome them.

Of Lord Halifax.

Another person of celebrity who died during this period, was Charles Montague, Earl of Halifax. During the war which followed the accession of King William, he had been made Chancellor of the Exchequer at a period of peculiar difficulty, when the coin was depreciated, the debts of the country in a state of confusion, and credit nearly gone. Calling the best heads of the kingdom to his assistance, he in a short time restored the currency, consolidated the public debt, settled regular funds to provide for paying both interest and principal, and commenced in England that system of public credit, which has since been the cause both of her greatness and her sufferings. It is to Halifax that the plan of issuing exchequer bills of a small amount, is likewise to be attributed. What is curious, is, that his own favourite scheme of finance consisted in drawing a large revenue by direct, in preference to indirect taxation, and that he was praised by some of his cotemporaries for the novel plan of raising the necessary supply, within the year in which it was required.* Thus has the debt of Great Britain ever been augmented, upon the faith of her determination to make no debt!

Of Lord Somers.

At the end of April, 1716, died Lord Somers, a man whose name will ever be connected with the history of the liberties of England. His first efforts in a public cause were made in 1681; when he remodelled a pamphlet written by

* Vide Burnet.

Algernon Sydney, in vindication of the acts of the two Parliaments which preceded the victory of arbitrary power. In the reign of James he was one of the counsel of the seven bishops, and a main instrument in bringing about the Revolution. He was honoured with the intimate confidence of King William, and in the time of Anne, was a principal member of the ministry which supported Marlborough. Finally, he had the greatest part in concerting the Union with Scotland, and the Regency Bill; two measures of the greatest importance to the Hanover Succession. Thus he was engaged in every contest that was fought on the side of liberty, from the complete defeat of the good old cause, towards the end of the reign of Charles the Second, to the final triumph of liberty and order by the establishment of the throne of George the First. His firmness, moderation, and wisdom, greatly contributed to this result; he used all his influence with the Whigs to induce them to support King William; and while he was the determined friend of freedom, he fully perceived the necessity of smoothing by mildness, rather than encountering by force, the obstacles that were opposed to the triumph of his opinions. He was gentle and attractive in his manners, always allowing to those with whom he conversed, the points in which he thought them right, before he disputed others on which he wished to convince them; he was possessed of great learning, a solid judgment, and was both a powerful orator in the senate, and a persuasive counsellor in the cabinet. "*Prodesse quam conspici,*" was his motto and his maxim. He aspired to be useful to his country, without the vain desire of attracting admiration to himself, and he received his reward in the warm attachment

and grateful veneration of the people, to whose cause he devoted his life. He left many writings behind him published at various times, generally without his name. His sincere love of truth and liberty, and a plain forcible style, are remarkable in all of them; but in them, as in his actions, it is evident that he aspired rather to persuade others of what was to their advantage, than to make a display of his own eloquence and capacity. In this respect he was the very opposite of Bolingbroke. Finally, Lord Somers is a bright and a great example of a statesman, who could live in times of revolution without rancour, who could hold the highest posts in a court without meanness, and who could unite mildness and charity to his opponents, with the firmest attachment to the great principles of liberty, civil and religious, which he had early espoused, long promoted, and never abandoned.

CHAPTER II.

The Duke of Orleans invested with the Regency. His Policy to Foreign States. Affairs of Spain. Alberoni. War between Spain and the Quadruple Alliance. Dismissal of Alberoni. Peace. Barrier Treaty. Turkish War. Peace of Passarowitz.

BEFORE the funeral of Lewis the Fourteenth had been followed by the execrations of the populace, his memory had received an affront of a different kind from the nobility and parliament of France.

When the dying monarch had foretold that his will would not be observed, he little knew how near his prediction was to its accomplishment. The inclination of the Parliament, with the exception of the first president, De Mesmes, whose character was by no means respected, leant strongly in favour of the Duke of Orleans, and that prince had the good fortune to count D'Aguesseau and Joly de Fleury, the two most able and most upright of the magistrates, among the foremost of his advisers. The precedents of the minorities of Lewis the Thirteenth and Lewis the Fourteenth, on both of which occasions the Parliament had annulled the dispositions of the monarch, were obvious examples for imitation, and the vanity of the magistrates could scarcely fail to be tempted by the opportunity of distributing at their pleasure, that sovereign power beneath which they had so long lain prostrate. The courtiers, on the other hand, seeing in the Duke of Orleans, the competitor most likely to be successful, had hastened to sell him their good offices, and one by one had pledged

themselves to support his cause. Even the more moderate and respectable among the nobility had gone over to his party, from the time the life of Lewis had been despaired of.* The popular feeling was likewise strongly in his favour; hatred of the Jesuits was the sentiment uppermost in the minds of all; and the nation was ready to take any chances rather than see the supreme power in the hands of a pupil of Madame de Maintenon, who was considered, however unjustly, the great instigator of religious persecution.

To all these motives for security, the Duke of Orleans added various precautions. For a sum of 150,000 livres he bought the Duke of Guiche, Colonel of the French guards, who was supposed to be firmly attached to the Duke of Maine: Contades, major of the same corps, and Reynold, colonel of the Swiss guards, were gained by the like means; the place of assembly was surrounded by their troops, and soldiers dressed as citizens were mixed in the crowd which filled the hall of the Parliament. Lord Stair, the ambassador of England, attended in one of the galleries, and his presence was supposed to imply the favour of his court towards the Duke of Orleans.

With all these advantages, there could be little doubt on which side victory would incline. The ease, grace, and address of the Duke of Orleans, contrasted with the timidity, awkwardness, and hesitation of the Duke of Maine, adorned a triumph which had already been secured.

Sitting of the Parliament.

It was on the day following the death of Lewis, that the rival candidates appeared before the assembled Parliament. The Duke of Orleans began and related, though with a trou-

* Mémoires de Berwick.

bled voice, the speech which he alledged had been addressed to him by the late king, beginning, " My Nephew, I have " made a will, in which I have preserved to you all the rights " to which your birth entitles you," and ending with the words, " I have made the dispositions which I thought the " wisest; but as it is impossible to foresee every thing, if " there is any thing amiss, it may be altered." After giving this somewhat suspicious evidence, the Duke of Orleans desired the Parliament to decide at one and the same time, upon the title which he derived from his birth, and that which he might receive from the will. He added with infinite address, " In " all that I shall undertake for the public good, I hope to be " assisted by your counsels, and your wise remonstrances." He concluded with declaring, that he had no object at heart but to relieve the distresses of the people, to restore the finances, to maintain peace both at home and abroad, and to establish union and tranquillity in the church.

When the Duke of Orleans had finished, Joly de Fleury, the King's advocate, rose and spoke upon the request he had made. He pronounced a panegyric upon his virtues, and prayed the Parliament to accede to his wishes, as just and reasonable.

The will itself having been thus previously undermined, was now read.* It produced the effect which might have been expected from an act so contradictory and anomalous. But above all, it was evident that the council named in it, contained no person capable of defending its provisions. Ministers without a name, marshals without reputation, courtiers without substance, were, with some few exceptions, the component parts of an authority, raised up against the best

* For an account of the will, see page 104, of this volume.

precedents of the monarchy, and opposed to the pretensions of an able, vigourous, and ambitious prince. During the reading of the will a deep silence was observed; but when the reader came to the codicil, giving to the Duke of Maine the care of the King's education, and the command of the household troops, there arose a sullen murmur, which the president in vain endeavoured to suppress, by saying from time to time, " This is our law." As soon as the reading was finished, the Duke of Orleans began to speak, and after a few words of praise and regret on the memory of Lewis, protested strongly against the dispositions made for the government of the state, which he said he found it difficult to reconcile with what the late king had said to him; he hinted, looking at the Duke of Maine, that Lewis had not perfectly understood what he had been made to do; he declared that honour would not permit him to suffer the injury done to his birth, and he therefore claimed a full unrestricted regency, and desired that the Parliament would decide upon this claim, previously to considering the other articles of the will.

The Duke of Orleans declared Regent.

This speech made a great impression. The Duke of Maine wished to speak, but the Duke of Orleans stopped him, saying, " Sir, you will speak in your turn." After another speech from the King's Advocate, who quoted various precedents, to shew that the Regency had always been given to the nearest relation of the deceased monarch, a general acclamation proclaimed the Duke of Orleans Regent with full powers, and the intrigues of years were dissipated in a moment.

Some discussion arose between the new Regent and the Duke of Maine, respecting the command of the household

troops, attributed to the latter by the codicil. The Duke of La Force seeing that the Duke of Orleans was lowering himself into a personal altercation, advised him to adjourn the sitting till the afternoon. This measure was a master stroke. In the afternoon the Duke of Orleans renewed the requests he had previously made; he desired that he might have the choice of the council of regency, saying that he would in that case be quite willing to be bound by the vote of the majority; he asked however that he might be exempt from this restriction in distributing honours and employments, on the specious pretext, that he was willing to be tied down to prevent his doing harm, and only desired to be free in doing good; he forcibly represented the absurdity of placing the command of the household troops in the hands of a person independent of the government; and finally requested, that the Duke of Bourbon might have immediate admission into the council, in direct contravention to the will. The lawyers of the crown supported these pretensions, and the Parliament were evidently prepared to confirm them. After a sullen resignation, therefore, from the Duke of Maine, of the whole of the power attributed to him by the will, except that of superintending the King's education, a decree was passed granting all the requests of the Duke of Orleans, who, in his turn, promised that, on a subsequent day, he would develope a plan for replacing the secretaries of state by councils. The sitting was then dissolved. The Regent was accompanied to his palace by the acclamations of an immense crowd, which had assembled to hear the result. Three years before he had received from the same people a very different treatment, but for their credit it must be said, he had likewise been in a

very different situation: he was then pointed out by his uncle as the murderer of his cousin; he was now looked upon by every branch of the state as the deliverer of the nation from the miserable dominion of a monk and a mistress. It may be said, indeed, that the judgment of the people was hasty, but it cannot be alledged that their feelings were perverted.*

Spirit of the new government.

The first maxim of the new government was to be in every thing the opposite of the old. The foreign alliances, the domestic policy, the forms of administration, the manners of the court, were all changed. To condemn any measure, it was sufficient to say, "That is too like the old system."† The same persons, it is true, still sought, and many of them still obtained power and patronage, but it was by different means; their language, their actions, their very countenances were altered; their minds alone remained unchanged, stamped by the mark of indelible servility.

The change of measures promised, and in part begun by the Regent, was extremely pleasing to the people. The memory of Lewis the Fourteenth was pursued with a kind of popular fury; his name was never uttered but with indignation; his statues were covered with insulting placards, and it was scarcely safe to mention his reign with praise.‡ The Regent, at once to increase his popularity, and testify his gratitude, restored to the Parliament the power of making

* For the sitting of the Parliament, see the Procès Verbal in the Mémoires de la Regence, Saint Simon, Duclos, and Mémoires de Berwick. In the account given above, I have weighed the unfaithful memory of Saint Simon, against the official reserve of the Parliament. † Bolingbroke. Letter to Wyndham.

‡ Vie de Philippe d'Orleans.

remonstrances, with the sole condition that they should be made within eight days after the deliberation upon the subject.* Before entering, however, upon the subject of the internal government of France under the Regent, it may be convenient to exhibit a view of her external relations, and relate the attempt of the King of Spain to disturb the settlement of the peace of Utrecht.

Origin of the connection between George I. and the Regent.

When Lord Stair had been dispatched by the government of George the First, as Ambassador to the court of France, he found the King indisposed, both from the state of his health, and his ancient inclinations, to receive him with favour. Seeing that the reign could not last long, he turned his attention to the Duke of Orleans, who, he rightly conjectured, would soon become master of the state. An inferior agent of the name of Remond introduced him to the Abbé Dubois, a preceptor of the Duke, who was known to have much influence with him; to Canillac, a cynic, who loved the world, (on both accounts a favourite with the Duke of Orleans), and through their means to the Duke of Noailles, then beginning to worship the rising sun. By the aid of these several persons, it was represented to the Duke of Orleans, that as George was a kind of *usurper* on the throne of England, so likewise he would be an usurper in France, if the death of the young King should oblige him to assert his pretensions to the crown. That it was for the interest of two princes, in the same situation, to join their forces, but that it was more especially the interest of the Duke of Orleans, whose antagonist, Philip the Fifth, was armed with fleets and troops; while George, a King already in possession, had for his com-

* Viè de Philippe d'Orleans.

petitor a vagabond prince, destitute in condition, and desperate in fortune.* They concluded, therefore, that the union would be altogether in favour of the Duke of Orleans, who would exchange an hypothetical promise, for a solid and powerful alliance.

This reasoning made a strong impression on the Prince. One of his most intimate friends, however, the Duke of St. Simon, made an able remonstrance against the policy proposed. He considered that the Tory party had a right to the gratitude of the Regent, as having alone saved France from the greatest misfortunes, prevented the invasion of the kingdom, and placed the crown of Spain upon the head of Philip. He thought that to abandon this party, in order to embrace another, which had always been hostile to French interests, would cover the government with infamy, injure the national reputation in the eyes of all, and alienate for ever, the men to whom France owed her deliverance, without diminishing the hatred and jealousy of their opponents.

Policy of the Regent.

The personal interests of the Regent, on this occasion, outweighed the gratitude of France, and the Jacobites were abandoned, for the sake of obtaining the friendship and support of the reigning King of England. Hence, the lukewarm behaviour of the Duke of Orleans to the friends of the Pretender in the rebellion of 1715, which we have seen in the last chapter; and his connexion with George the First, which we shall soon find ripen into a more formal alliance. Indeed, upon his accession to the Regency, the Duke of Orleans made a proposal to confirm the treaty of Utrecht, as the basis of a more intimate union; but this offer was rejected by

* St. Simon. Hardwicke Papers.

the English ministry.* They probably feared to shew themselves to the English people as the maintainers of a treaty, against which they so violently declaimed. Perhaps too, they were not yet fully resolved to confirm the peace of Utrecht.

Conduct of Lord Stair.

An anecdote is related with respect to the conduct of Lord Stair, on the occasion of the Pretender's crossing France to embark for Scotland, which I know not that I can notice any where so well as in this place. It is said by Duclos and others, that he applied to the Regent to have the Chevalier arrested, naming the town through which he was to pass on a certain day, and that finding the Regent insincere in his promises of compliance, he sent persons to assassinate the Chevalier on the road. The first part of this story is probably true; it is also very likely that Stair should have sent emissaries to watch the journey of the Pretender; but that he ever intended to have him assassinated, is totally disbelieved by Marshal Berwick, who mentions Lord Mar, as concurring with him in opinion, that Stair was incapable of an action so atrocious.† This justice is due to the memory of a spirited and able man, who rendered great services to the liberties of his country.

Affairs of Spain.

Let us now turn to the affairs of Spain. Philip the Fifth, when confirmed on the throne of Spain, gave way to that indolence of disposition, which was his most prominent quality. It was in vain that his royal grandfather in his instructions and despatches, had advised him to govern for himself, and submit to be led by no one; a natural want of energy in his own character, and the interested activity of ambitious attendants, converted him into a puppet guided at the will of

* Mémoires de Berwick. Flassan. † Mem. de Berwick, t. ii.

whoever had the most skill in directing the wires which moved him. Religious devotion and conjugal affection were his only passions; or, to use the expression of Alberoni, he wanted nothing but a wife and a prayer book.

Death of the Queen. Feb. 14, 1714.

With a King of this disposition, the death of his Queen, which took place on the 14th of February, 1714, was an occurrence of the greatest political importance, not only for Spain, but for Europe. Indeed, it may fairly be said, that the greater part of the wars and treaties of the first half of the eighteenth century were the consequences of this event. The Princess Orsini, who had so absolutely governed the Spanish, and made herself feared even by the French court, during the life of the late Queen, proceeded, without loss of time, to ruminate on the way of supplying the place of her deceased mistress. With this view, her first object was to possess herself of the means of obtaining constant access to the King. Philip, from grief or decency, had retired from the palace where the Queen had died, to the house of the Duke of Medina Celi: the Princess established herself in an adjoining convent of Capuchins, broke down the party walls which connected the two buildings, and caused a covered gallery to be made which formed a communication between them. Thus enabled to visit the King at all times, she obtained a great ascendancy over his mind; and it has even been suspected that she wished to marry him herself. At the advanced age of seventy, such an attempt seems wild and improbable; yet the princess may have been tempted beyond the line of prudence by the example of Madame de Maintenon; and it is difficult, otherwise, to account for the disgust which Philip, even when obeying her orders, at this time conceived for her.

In the mean time the situation of the two parties, inspired the greatest curiosity in the court. Robinet, the King's confessor, being asked by him one day, what news there was from Paris, answered, "They say, Sire, at Paris, that your Majesty "is going to marry the Princess Orsini." "Oh no, not that," replied the King dryly. That such was in reality his determination, the Princess Orsini was soon aware, and obliged, if she ever entertained the project, to relinquish it as hopeless, she endeavoured to find a wife for Philip, who might be formed by her instructions, and moulded by her will. On the day of the late Queen's funeral, while the mournful procession was passing along the road, the Princess was conversing in a balcony with Alberoni, the agent of the Duke of Parma at the court of Madrid. "We must provide a new wife "for the King," said the favourite, and proceeded to mention the names of several princesses. Alberoni raised objections to each, and added, "We must find one who is quiet and "docile, and not likely to interfere in state affairs." Where "shall we discover such a person?" said the Princess. Alberoni went over the names of several, and then in a careless manner mentioned the daughter of the late Duke of Parma; adding that "she was a good girl, fat with the butter and "cheese of the Picentine, brought up at the farm of her "uncle Francis, the reigning Duke, severely educated by the "German Princess, her mother, and accustomed to hear of "nothing but needle work and embroidery." He hinted at the same time on her claims in Italy, as the only means of regaining a footing in that kingdom. Elizabeth Farnese, thus artfully brought forward by the envoy of Parma, was the daughter of Odoardo Farnese, Duke of Parma, and of Dorothea Sophia, daughter of the Elector Palatine. Dorothea,

Sophia had married in second nuptials Francis, the reigning Duke of Parma. Her daughter was the heiress of the Duchy of Parma, and had claims upon that of Tuscany, her great grandmother having been a daughter of Cosmo the Second. Her sense and understanding were far above the representations of Alberoni. She spoke several languages with great facility, had a cultivated taste, and concealed beneath the artful dissimulation of an Italian, the lofty spirit and aspiring ambition of a Spaniard.

Marriage of the King.

The Princess Orsini, whether deceived by Alberoni, or as other writers alledge, forced to consent to a marriage already concerted between Alberoni and the Pope,* agreed to place Elizabeth upon the throne of Spain. With the consent of Philip, she empowered Alberoni to ask her hand of the court of Parma, and privately obtained a dispensation from the Pope. The whole negociation was kept secret, even from Lewis, to prevent, as it was pretended, the Emperor from obstructing a match calculated to give Spain a footing in Italy. The Count de Chalais, nephew of the Princess Orsini, who had been sent to Paris expressly to inform the King in general terms that his grandson wished to marry, was afterwards ordered to make a secret of the whole matter, and it was not till all was settled, that he was authorized to ask the formal consent of the King of France. Lewis, hurt and angry at the want of confidence shewn by his grandson, answered, " Well, if he must marry, let him marry."

Government of the Princess Orsini.

During the few months which elapsed between the death of the former Queen and the arrival of the new, the Princess Orsini absolutely directed the government of Spain. The

* Histoire du C. Alberoni, by Rousset.

Cardinal del Giudice, Inquisitor General, was removed from the government, and Orri, who had been formerly sent by the French ministry to Spain, was entrusted with the sole management of the finances. Orri was a person who had held a low office in the excise of France, and had been afterwards steward of the Duchess of Portsmouth. In the controul of the affairs of Spain he certainly shewed considerable talents. He brought under one system the complicated branches of the revenue, which had hitherto been directed by different chiefs, and had produced many jarring irregularities. The internal taxes were by him divided into twenty-one farms, each occupying a separate province: the customs were likewise simplified, and placed under the direction of the council of finances.

Ecclesiastical Reform.

Encouraged by his success, Orri, under the direction of the Princess, attempted an attack on the ecclesiastical body. Macanaz, attorney general of Castile, presented to the King a strong memorial, complaining of the abuses of sanctuary, the civil immunities of the clergy, and the exorbitant power of the tribunal of the Papal nuncio. Philip was somewhat struck by the facts thus laid before him; not daring however to take any decisive step, he referred the memorial to the council of Castile. But in Spain the subjects of the King were the slaves of the church; the Inquisition was informed of the memorial, and instantly denounced it as heretical. The sentence was affixed on the walls of every church in the kingdom, and even on the palace of the King of France, at Marly; it was signed by Del Giudice, then residing at Paris, and contained, besides a denunciation of the offensive memorial, a condemnation of the two French authors, Barclay and

Talon, the latter of whom was at this very time a member of the Parliament of Paris. This astonishing insolence excited at first the indignation of the Spanish monarch. On a previous occasion, Macanaz had represented to him in the strongest manner, in a private audience, that the ecclesiastical power was making every day new encroachments upon the royal authority; that the right of sanctuary was extended beyond the churches to the contiguous shops and dwellings; that the monastic houses were always accumulating fresh property, which thenceforth became inalienable, and free from all direct tax; that the church had more subjects in the kingdom than the crown; that the tribunal of the nuncio had usurped a despotic authority within the realm, and that unfaithful ministers, especially one whom he named, had favoured all these abuses, in order to obtain rich benefices for their relations and friends.* On the appearance of the Inquisitorial sentence, Macanaz obtained another audience, pointed out the insolence and disloyalty of the holy office, in attacking a memorial which the King himself had referred to his sworn counsellors, and represented the personal danger to which he was exposed when acting in the capacity of minister of the crown. Philip, roused by these remonstrances, banished from court Don Luis Curiel, the minister pointed at by Macanaz, and a Dominican friar who supported him. But the people, ever strongly attached to their faith, caught the alarm, and the clergy, ever anxious for their temporal interests, instantly raised the cry that religion was in danger. Philip therefore with his usual weakness submitted the question to a council of theologians, who naturally decided

* San Phelipe, t. ii. p. 123.

that the memorial in question was full of errors; that the condemnation of the Inquisition was legal and proper; and that the King would act against the canons, if he interfered to prevent the trial and punishment of Macanaz by the Holy Office. The only point which they decided in favour of the King was, that Del Giudice, when out of the kingdom, had no right to sign the sentence. Philip, therefore, taking up the shred of authority, of which he was not stripped by his subjects, ordered Del Giudice to resign his office, and appointed two new members of the council of the Inquisition, with a design it would appear, of subjecting that tribunal to his authority, if not of remodelling and totally reforming it. But the Pope, fearing that the royal power would gain strength against the Inquisition,* refused to accept the resignation of Del Giudice; and the sacred tribunal itself would not admit the new members named by the King, on the ground that the Pope, and their own body, alone had the power of appointment.

In this juncture it behoved Philip to take a vigorous step, and clear his authority from priestly usurpation. Whether he would have done so, had the Princess Orsini and Orri remained in power, is uncertain. The effeminate character of Philip, indeed, was incapable of conceiving any large or bold views, but the masculine understanding of the Princess had marked the nature of the disease of the Spanish monarchy, and was fully prepared with the most vigorous remedies. In the midst of these schemes, however, she was alarmed at hearing that the future Queen had an understanding superior to deception, and a temper above controul. She instantly

* The express words of San Phelipe.

dispatched the most pressing orders to suspend the conclusion of the marriage. Her messenger arrived at Parma, on the very morning of the ceremony, but as the object of his journey was suspected, he was stopped at the gates, and induced by a mixture of bribes and threats to delay his entrance till the following day. The object was defeated, but the intention was not forgotten.

Disgrace of the Princess Orsini.

In a few days after the marriage ceremony the young Queen set out for Spain, and going by sea from Sestri to Genoa, made the rest of the journey by land. On her way she stopped two days at Bayonne to confer with the Queen Mother. When she approached Madrid, the Princess Orsini, full of schemes for retaining all real power in her own hands, set out to meet her mistress. But how different was the destiny of this aspiring favourite! She was resting at a small village called Xadraca, when the Queen arrived. She instantly quitted the table where she was taking some refreshment, went to the foot of the stairs, and kneeling, kissed the hand of the Queen. Elizabeth allowed herself to be conducted to the apartment prepared for her, but scarcely had the Princess begun the usual compliments, before the Queen angrily interrupted her, found fault with her dress and manner,* and when the Princess attempted a submissive apology, instantly silenced her, and calling to the guard, cried "Turn out that mad woman who has dared to insult me." She even pushed her out of the apartment, and then summoning the officer on duty commanded him to arrest the Princess,

* It was said by the Queen's friends as an excuse for her, that the reproaches on dress came from the Princess; but this version is totally disbelieved by Madame de Maintenon, and is quite improbable.

and conduct her to the frontier. On his expressing some hesitation, the Queen said, " Have you not his Majesty's " command to obey me without reserve?" The officer confessed he had; but was still so thunderstruck with this sudden change, that he declined to obey till he had a written order: the Queen instantly wrote the order on her knee. The Princess was then obliged, without changing her dress, to put herself into a coach, in which, accompanied by one female attendant and two officers, she was conducted during the whole night towards the frontier. For a long time she imagined that Philip would resent the conduct of his Queen, but after two days vain expectation, her two nephews joined her with a cold and formal letter from the King, promising merely that her pensions should be duly discharged. She then assumed a countenance of resignation, and without a a tear or a sigh, a complaint or an invective, pursued a journey, accompanied by every circumstance of misery and inconvenience, till at length, after twenty-three days travelling, she reached St. Jean de Luz. The guards, her attendants, who had at first been struck with astonishment at the change of her fortunes, left her in admiration of the fortitude with which she bore it.* The remainder of the life of this remarkable woman contains little worthy of notice. She wrote to Madame de Maintenon from St. Jean de Luz, in a style of affected philosophy, " I now inhabit," she said, " a small house " near the sea: I see that element sometimes calm, but oftener " agitated; fit emblem of courts, and of what I have seen: " of what indeed has recently happened to me, which must " excite your generous compassion." Madame de Maintenon,

* St. Simon, t. v. p. 227.

if she did not feel pity, affected it, and by her influence the Princess again fluttered for a short time about Versailles. A few years afterwards, a reconciliation between Philip the Fifth and the Duke of Orleans involved her in a new disgrace, and she was obliged to leave the court of France for ever. But unable to bear a private life, she never resided at a magnificent house, built by her direction at Chanteloup; and still haunting the precincts of royalty, she at length, after new intrigues, obtained permission to go to Rome, where she did the honours of the mock court of the Pretender. She died in 1722.

We must now return to the court of Spain, where the causes of the disgrace of the Princess were long matter for speculation and conjecture. It was naturally supposed that Alberoni had a main hand in this intrigue; but the fact is, he was totally ignorant of the design until he was informed of it by the Queen herself, when he met her at Pamplona. At first he endeavoured to dissuade her from so bold an attempt, but she threw upon the table a note of the King, which put an end to all objection. The note was a curious one, and was itself a proof of the influence which Philip was so desirous to shake off. He told his bride to dismiss the Princess, because, if allowed to remain, she would interfere and prevent harmony between them; warning her at the same time not to delay her measures, "for if she converses with you only two "hours, she will captivate you."* This note seems to give

* According to Duclos, the note finished in these words. "Au moins prenez "bien garde de ne pas manquer votre coup tout d'abord, car si elle vous voit seule- "ment deux heures, elle vous enchainera, et nous empêchera de coucher ensem- "ble, comme avec la feue reine." Duclos, t. i.

the clue to the whole affair: Philip was too weak not to be governed by the superior talents and spirit of the Princess; but he felt acutely the bondage in which he was kept by the haughty and humiliating dominion of a woman, whose personal attractions had long ceased. It is probable, likewise, that some of his ecclesiastical advisers had alarmed his piety, with respect to the course he was taking on the subject of the Inquisition. In this perplexity, like all weak kings, hating his minister, whom he was yet afraid to face, he employed the agency of the new Queen to get rid of her, without the difficulty of encountering her reproaches or entreaties.

The banishment and disgrace of the Princess Orsini, was accompanied by a total change in the conduct of affairs. The Cardinal del Giudice was immediately restored to his functions, and the Inquisition flourished again in full vigour. This was chiefly accomplished by the intrigues of a man, of whom it is necessary to speak more fully.

Alberoni. Giulio Alberoni was the son of a labouring gardener in the suburbs of Placentia: when a boy he had been servant to a parish clerk, in which situation he had attracted the notice of a priest, who, struck by his intelligence, taught him reading and the rudiments of the Latin tongue. His merit procured him patrons, and he became in the course of time a prebendary in the cathedral of Placentia, and tutor, or companion, to the nephew of the bishop. Happily for him the French, in their advance to Parma and Placentia, committed such exactions, that the Bishop of St. Domino was appointed by the Duke to intercede with their commander, and Alberoni was employed as interpreter. But the coarse and filthy manners of Vendome so

disgusted the Bishop, that, after the first interview, he became averse to the business, and soon transferred the whole affair to Alberoni. Alberoni not only succeeded for his master, but so delighted Vendome by complying with his gross manners, dressing Italian dishes for him, and playing the part of a buffoon, that he took him with him to France, and recommended him to Lewis the Fourteenth for a pension. Vendome, when afterwards in Spain, introduced him to the court of Madrid, where he soon obtained great reputation for address, and at length wriggled himself into the office of envoy of Parma. In this situation, ever active, intriguing, and ambitious, he contrived, as we have seen, to secure a patroness upon the throne. The first use he made of his power was to place in the hands of the Queen, in his first interview, the memorial of Macanaz, with a view of exciting her indignation against the ruling ministers of Spain.* In this enterprize he too well succeeded; and the revolution, which restored the Inquisition, raised him to the conduct of affairs.

When, by the steps that we have traced, Alberoni acquired a predominant influence in the councils of the monarchy, he found himself called to a task so difficult, not to say impossible, that it is no disparagement to his talents if he failed in accomplishing it. He was required to make large accessions to the Spanish power, against the will of all the great powers of Europe, with the forces of a weak, exhausted, and disjointed monarchy. But in order to understand the events which follow, it is necessary to take a view of the state of Europe at this time.

* Letter of Alberoni to Cardinal Paolucci, in the Istoria del C. Alberoni.

State of Europe. Projects of the Queen of Spain.

The abandonment of their allies by the English ministry previously to the peace of Utrecht, produced, among other bad effects, a hasty and temporary arrangement, instead of a solid and permanent settlement on the continent. The Emperor, although obliged to desist from pursuing his pretension by force of arms, refused to resign the title of King of Spain, and forming a council at Vienna of those Spaniards who adhered to his party, publicly called it the Spanish council, and professedly entrusted it with Spanish affairs. Philip the Fifth, on his part, saw with reluctance the Austrians take possession of Lombardy, and still cherished in his mind, the favourite idea of repossessing himself of the Italian dominions of Spain. The birth of a son in January, 1716, made the Queen look, if possible, with still greater anxiety to Italy than Philip himself. To provide a sovereignty for this son sufficiently large to make him independent, became the favourite object of her policy, and through her of the cabinet of Madrid. "In a word," says Mr. Doddington, after expatiating on the influence of Elizabeth, "the absolute controul over Spain will belong to *the highest bidder for the Queen's son.* This is the grand and only maxim, which has never changed since I have been here."* These projects of aggrandizement in Italy became therefore the chief topic of deliberation with Alberoni, and how to accomplish them was, by day and night, the object of his anxious and ambitious reflections.

In the first place it was evident, that nothing could be immediately done by the forces of Spain alone. Reduced to a state of insignificance by the weakness of the Austrian princes,

* Mr. Doddington to Secretary Stanhope, June 15, 1716. Coxe, Memoirs of the Kings of Spain, c. 25.

and the tyranny of the church, Spain had come out of a long war, if not essentially impoverished, yet completely destitute of means at the immediate disposal of the state. To bring the kingdom to an equality with other European states, it was necessary to reform all the departments of the government, and to rouse the nation from that apathy in which it had long slumbered. To these objects the attention of Alberoni was incessantly applied. He saw with a glance how rich in resources was the country, how energetic in character the people; but he likewise saw, that time and patience would be necessary before the ore of the mine could be converted into the coin of circulation. With an over sanguine persuasion of his capacity, he continually said to Philip, "If your Majesty "will maintain your kingdom in peace for five years, I will "pledge myself to render you the most powerful monarch in "Europe."* But his master, eager for glory, though impatient of labour, demanded immediate triumph; and as none are so little sensible of difficulties as those who are totally incapable of overcoming them, the minister found it necessary to resort to other means. As Spain, therefore, could not at that time undertake a war single handed with any reasonable prospect of success, the next question was, whether it might not be possible to form such alliances, that the Emperor would be compelled to yield, without a struggle, the territories which she coveted. Such appears to have been the ultimate plan of Alberoni. Yet a very rapid view will convince us that it was as difficult, not to say as hopeless a project, as the more warlike schemes of Philip himself.

The four great powers who had taken a part in the war

* Letter of Alberoni to Cardinal Paolucci.

of the Spanish succession were, France, the Empire, England, and Holland. Of these four, the Emperor was the object of the present attack. As to France, the diplomatic relations between her and Spain were far from being amicable. Philip considered the Regency his due, as the nearest of blood to the young King; he heard therefore with indignation that his claims had been totally overlooked, and that the Duke of Orleans had possessed himself of the whole power of the monarchy. He still, however, kept his eye fixed on the succession to the French crown, and consequently regarded the Regent as a rival, against whom he should have to contend for the throne by force of arms. The Regent, on his side, was fully aware of the disposition of his cousin, and omitted no means of exciting dissensions, which might weaken his authority in Spain. He dispatched orders to his ambassador at Madrid, to keep up a close connection with the Spanish malcontents, of whom there were many among the grandees and nobles; and above all, to omit no artifice for making a quarrel between Alberoni and D'Aubenton, the jesuit confessor. For this purpose he was directed to spread reports that the latter was entirely devoted to France, to make him frequent visits, and if they were observed, to affect a mystery, which should still further excite suspicion. "Recollect," said the Regent, "that D'Aubenton is a man of great cunning, and very closely connected with Alberoni, and that you could render no more essential service to the state than to make them quarrel, with the view of ruining both."*

Policy of Alberoni.

In this state of affairs, of which Alberoni was fully aware, it was out of the question to look to an alliance with France:

* Mém. de Noailles.

he therefore turned his eyes to the maritime powers—England and Holland. With England, especially, some causes of misunderstanding remained, which it was in the power of the new minister to do away, and thus obtain a claim on the gratitude of the British court. In the peace of Utrecht, some explanatory articles had been inserted, which placed the commerce of England with Spain in a much worse situation than it had stood during the reign of Charles II. The affair of the Assiento, likewise, was by no means settled; and these points of difference had hitherto been treated by the Spanish ministers, with all that spirit of enmity to Great Britain, which was the natural consequence of the long and bloody war, so lately concluded. On this ground, then, Alberoni began to work; his first appearance on the stage of foreign politics is thus described in a letter from Mr. Doddington, then Envoy at Madrid, to Secretary Stanhope, dated September 20, 1715. Sept. 1715,

"Baron Ripperda informs me that he received a mes-
"sage to repair to court, where a person waited to speak
"with him, by order of the King. He went, and found a
"gentleman of great consequence, who, he says, shewed him
"a power from the King, authorising him to speak on the
"part of his Majesty. They talked much relative to Dutch
"affairs, on which full satisfaction was promised. Afterwards
"the gentleman desired him to come to me this evening, and
"inform me, as from the King, that his Majesty was perfectly
"disposed to live in good understanding with my Sovereign.
"To give all imaginable proofs of it, he was ready to consent
"to annul the explanatory articles, and to do every thing cal-
"culated to promote a good intelligence between his Britannic

"Majesty and himself. Of this the gentleman desired I would "apprize my sovereign this night."*

These professions were followed by acts fully corresponding to them. In a very short time a new treaty was signed, abrogating the explanatory articles, and restoring England to the commercial advantages she had enjoyed under the Austrian Princes.† To the Cardinal del Giudice, who, astonished at the change of policy of his court, ventured to remonstrate, the King replied shortly, but decisively, "I consider the King "of England as my brother, and am determined to live in "friendship with him. Let me hear no more on this sub-"ject."‡ Philip even consented to set his name to a paper, declaring his determination to give no support to the Pretender and his adherents; and this declaration being published, contributed much to discourage the Jacobite party in every country of Europe.

Overtures to England.

Alberoni having obtained from his sovereign such large concessions in favour of England, began now to insinuate to the English envoy, that Spain would expect an equivalent. The Emperor of Germany had lately availed himself of a very slight pretext for attacking the republic of Genoa, and his troops had actually entered and occupied Novi. Upon this intelligence, Alberoni warmly appealed to the King of Great Britain as a guarantee of the neutrality of Italy. He even endeavoured to engage England in a strict alliance to preserve the existing state of things in that country; and the

* Coxe's Memoirs of Spain, c. 24.

† Treaty of Commerce between Spain and England. Dec. 1715.

‡ Coxe's Memoirs of Spain, c. 24.

English minister at Madrid informed the cabinet at home, probably on good grounds, that, a guaranty of the states of Parma and Tuscany to the Queen, and an English fleet to support the Spanish squadron in the Mediterranean, would, in his opinion, secure from Spain the most ample guaranty for the Hanover succession, and the most favourable arrangement of commercial interests.

These offers and insinuations placed the King of England in a singular situation. For a long period France had waged war against England, for the purpose of placing a member of her royal family on the throne of Spain, and securing the intimate alliance and support of that once powerful kingdom. During the same period the kingly title had been acknowledged to reside in James the Second, while the Elector of Hanover was considered in no other light than as a pretender, whom it was allowable to defeat by any means, and on any opportunity. Yet strange to say, the governments of France and Spain were at this moment, only one year after the death of Lewis the Fourteenth, contending which should purchase the alliance of England, and which should offer the most valuable security for the succession of the House of Brunswick! Two or three fortuitous events, the death of the two Dauphins, and the regency of the Duke of Orleans, had dissolved the connexion of the members of the Bourbon family, raised again those Pyrenees, which the memorable saying of Lewis had asserted to exist no longer, and scattered into air the projects, the treaties, the wars, the victories, and the treasons of many previous years. The English ministry suddenly saw itself made the umpire of Europe, and placed in a situation almost as favourable as if

the Grand Alliance had succeeded in their objects, and Bolingbroke had never been entrusted with power. So vain and fruitless are frequently the most subtle speculations of statesmen, and the most bloody encounters of hostile armies!

The offers of Spain, though gratifying to England, were not however the most advantageous that were made to her. If she accepted the proposals of Alberoni, she must be prepared to offend her old ally the Emperor, to excite new troubles in Italy, and to enter upon a new war, with no other friend than Spain, whose adherence, not cemented by natural interest, must be precarious and temporary. On the other hand, if she connected herself with the Emperor and France, she maintained an ancient alliance, obtained the guaranty of a great kingdom to the Protestant succession, secured by the personal interest of the Regent, and formed an union of powers strong enough to maintain the peace of Europe against all who might endeavour to disturb it. With these advantages were intimately connected the internal peace of Great Britain, and the safety of the reigning family. Impressed with considerations so weighty, the English minister returned a civil refusal to the proposals of Alberoni. "His Majesty," said Secretary Stanhope, "is perfectly disposed "to enter into a new treaty with the Catholic King, to re- "new and confirm the past; but the actual situation of affairs "does not permit him to form other engagements, which, "far from contributing to preserve the neutrality of Italy, "would give rise to jealousies tending to disturb it."*

May, 1716. In pursuance of these views, the King of England entered into an alliance with the Emperor for the reciprocal defence

* Mr. Stanhope to Mr. Doddington, March 13th, 1716.

of their respective territories. The treaty contained a clause guaranteing such future acquisitions as they should make by mutual consent. After this the Abbé Dubois repaired to the Hague, and subsequently to Hanover, to treat with George the First. In June an agreement was made between France and England, by which the succession of the crown of France, according to the provisions of the treaty of Utrecht, was guaranteed on the one side, and on the other, a similar guaranty was provided for the Hanover succession; the fortifications of Dunkirk were to be razed, and the Pretender to be sent beyond the Alps. In this treaty every stipulation was advantageous to England; for so happy was her position, that the exclusion of the King of Spain from the succession to the French crown, which had so long been the aim of her policy, was become, by the accession of the Duke of Orleans to the Regency, an object still dearer to the French than to the English cabinet.

Treaty between England and France. June, 1716.

These arrangements with France were, in the beginning of 1717, consolidated into an alliance between England, France, and Holland, called the Triple Alliance. It seems to have been understood among these powers, that the Emperor should have Sicily in exchange for Sardinia, which he had received by the treaty of Utrecht.

Triple Alliance. Jan. 4, 1717.

Upon the first intelligence of the treaty between England and the Emperor, Philip was greatly incensed. Yet, although the King was angry and his agent mortified, they were both sensible that, except from the maritime powers, they had no chance of receiving any assistance in their projects. It could never be disguised that the Duke of Orleans and Philip the Fifth were necessarily rivals, and that each was

busily employed in fomenting cabals and gaining partizans in the country of the other. Alberoni, therefore, endeavoured to lure the British ministry alternately by threats and promises. He gave secret orders to the agents of the government not to execute the late treaty of commerce, while, on the other hand, he protested to the English minister, that he had no power to counteract the influence of the Spanish counsellors. Not having as yet any ostensible situation, he was easily enabled to put off, upon his pretended insignificance, any thing he did not choose to perform. "Alberoni," says Mr. Doddington, "who has the power, is in no public situa-
"tion, and is to be seen and applied to, only when, and by
"those that he thinks proper. So that those to whom we
"can always apply, have not the authority, and those who
"have the authority, are not to be engaged further than they
"themselves please."*

Mission of Louville. July, 1717.

Alberoni made a curious use of this incognito upon the occasion of a French mission to Madrid. The Marquis of Louville, an early favourite of Philip, was sent by the Regent with the hope of restoring the French influence. While the ambassador intrigued with the malcontents, Louville was directed to gain the confidence of Alberoni, in order to procure, by his means, the dismissal of the confessor, and some of the persons most attached to the minister, after which it was supposed the overthrow of Alberoni himself would become an easy task.† Besides this disingenuous intrigue, Louville seems to have been authorized, on the part of the King of England, to offer Gibraltar to Spain as the price of peace.‡

* Coxe, chap. 25. † Mémoires de Louville, t. ii. p. 202.

‡ Coxe doubts this fact; but it is put out of question by the words of Lou-

Whatever his mission might have been, however, Alberoni, distrusting the secret part of it, was determined not to let it succeed. For this purpose, as soon as Louville arrived in the character of a private gentleman at Madrid, he received an order enjoining his instant departure. Two hours afterwards, while he was still agitated by this unexpected repulse, Alberoni walked into the room, loaded him with compliments, and expressed surprize and sorrow at hearing of the manner in which he had been received. Won by this sympathy, Louville shewed his full powers, which he had been ordered to reserve till the last extremity, and demanded an audience: but Alberoni, walking up and down the room, exclaimed in great emotion, "This is a terrible court; people "believe that I have credit; but in fact I have none!" Louville could obtain no more; the order for his departure indeed was suspended, but such representations were made to the Regent, that he was recalled without having been able to obtain an audience.*

Alberoni still continued to court the good will of the English, and to place his hopes on his means of favouring the commerce of England. He was greatly pleased at receiving a letter of compliment and amity from Secretary Stanhope, who, when a prisoner at Saragossa, during the war, had formed an acquaintance with him. Alberoni in reply hinted that

ville himself. "L'Abbé Dubois qui fait le traité en Hanovre, a mandé que mon "rappel précipité d'Espagne avait un moment fait hésiter. On a douté de la "bonne foi, ou tout au moins de la fermeté de M. le Régent dans l'alliance, après "le sacrifice généreux de Gibraltar que le roi Georges nous avait autorisé a pro-"poser en son nom." Mém. de Louville, ii. c. 24.

* Mém. de Noailles, t. v. p. 42, July, 1717. Mém. de Louville.

some English horses would be acceptable to the Queen; and as an excuse for delay in the business of commerce, said, "it is difficult to engage a young lady in examining matters of trade." By his intrigues, he was at length enabled to assume ostensibly, that direction of affairs, which he had long secretly held. The Cardinal del Giudice was deprived of all his ministerial offices, except his place in the council of state, and seeing at last that his disgrace could not be averted, he obtained the papal permission to relinquish the office of Great Inquisitor, and retired to Rome.

Alberoni, augmenting his ambition the more he was able to satisfy it, now employed all his arts to obtain a Cardinal's hat; with this view he induced the King to send a squadron, with a land force of 8000 men, to assist the Venetians in the defence of Corfu, and these troops arriving at a critical moment, were fortunate enough to save the place. This exploit procured for Alberoni both the promise of a hat, and a pretext for making fresh military and naval preparations in the ports of Spain. He now concluded the Assiento treaty with the English minister, and promised a full and exact execution of the late treaty of commerce.

Proposals of the Allies.

No sooner was the triple alliance ratified, than the powers who formed it proposed terms calculated, in their opinion, to satisfy both the Emperor and Philip, and consolidate the peace of Europe. To the Emperor they offered Sicily in exchange for Sardinia; to the Duke of Savoy Sardinia in the place of Sicily; and to Spain, the reversion of Tuscany and Parma, for the Queen and her issue. The Emperor was overjoyed to obtain Sicily, the object of his ambition; the Duke of Savoy was obliged to submit to the unequal ex-

change proposed to him; but the court of Spain peremptorily refused to acquiesce in the arrangement. The lofty pretensions of the King and his consort will best be collected from the language used by Alberoni upon the propositions which had been made by Mr. Stanhope to Beretti Landi, the Spanish ambassador at the Hague. "He (Alberoni) afterwards spoke," says Mr. Doddington, "of the proposals that had "been made concerning the states of Tuscany and Parma. "The King, he said, did not look upon them to be sufficient "to establish a balance, though they were even to be yielded "up by treaty to one of the Queen's children; for while the "Emperor was so strong in Italy, he would always be the mas- "ter to keep his word or not; and a thousand occasions "might happen in time, which might incline him to break it. "Further; that by this the King would be obliged to re- "nounce for ever *all his past pretensions in Italy, which he "might make good on a proper occasion,* for the sake of rights, "which might perhaps never, or late, fall into his hands; "(there still surviving three in one house, and two in the "other) and even when they should fall, might not be faith- "fully preserved, there being but a simple verbal promise in "his favour, and the other party having all the strength." *

Affairs were in this state, warlike preparations were making in the Spanish ports, the allies still bent upon negociation, when an event occurred which set fire to the mine, and kindled the flame in Europe. Don Joseph Molines, the Spanish ambassador at Rome, had been appointed Great Inquisitor in Spain in the room of Cardinal del Giudice. He was traversing the Milanese, on the way to his destination, upon the

Arrest of Molines.

* Coxe's Mem. of Spain.

faith of a papal safe-conduct, and the verbal promise of the Imperial ambassador, when he was arrested by the Austrians, confined in the castle of Milan, and his papers sent to Vienna. This outrageous violation of the law of nations, committed for the purpose of obtaining an insight to the designs of Spain upon Italy, so greatly roused the indignation of Philip and his Queen, that they resolved upon instant war. To this resolution they were partly incited by the Marquess of San Phelipe, the Spanish minister at Genoa, who, on sending an account of the transaction, gave his opinion, that the King ought to go to any extremity, rather than submit to such an insult.

Alberoni, as he affirms, saw with grief and consternation, this abrupt determination of his sovereigns. The kingdom was hitherto unprepared to make any great effort without assistance; the navy was scarcely formed; the reforms in finance and administration too recent to be available. Catalonia, Aragon, and Valencia, were not yet reconciled to the Bourbon dynasty; and so great was the discontent prevailing even at Madrid, that Philip had, a few weeks before, asked of the King of Great Britain permission to levy 3000 Irish troops to guard his person and court. The grandees were engaged in cabals against the government, and every sinew of the state was still paralysed by the vices of the despotic and feeble government that had so long prevailed. On the other hand, the attempts of Alberoni to form alliances abroad, had completely failed; England and Holland were engaged with France and the Emperor in resisting the Italian projects of Spain. The attempt to make war single-handed with the Emperor, would probably only serve to furnish the House of

Austria with a pretext for sending a new army into Italy, to occupy the States of Parma and Tuscany; while the long continuance of hostilities could not fail to exhaust Spain, and strengthen her enemies.

Advice of Alberoni. June, 1717

These reasons, and many others, were ably urged by Alberoni, in a letter addressed to the Duke of Popoli, who had advised Philip in favour of war. Placing the disadvantages of such a course in the strongest light, he thus concludes: "In a word, this is leading the world to imagine that a *few* "*mad Italians*, from a passion for their native country, have "urged the King to the extermination and ruin of Spain. "Without allies, the Catholic King cannot hope to conquer "Italy; particularly at a time when he has neither troops, nor "money, nor able commanders. With three provinces more "disloyal than ever, with the people provoked, the nobility "discontented, and deprived as we are of all human assis- "tance, we are not able, according to your excellency's "phrase, to oppose force to force. Lastly, in such an im- "portant affair, I want the courage of your excellency to say, "or to think, that notwithstanding so many difficulties, we "ought to throw ourselves into the hands of providence, and "trust to the justice of our cause. This I declared to their "Majesties, on the first word with which they honoured me "on the subject; and I should be most happy, even were the "enterprize attended with the most happy result, that the "world should know, my weak judgment did not approve it."†

This letter was communicated to the King by the Duke of Popoli, who at the same time confessed himself converted by the arguments used in it. The letter of the Duke of

† Coxe, Vol. 2, pp. 273, 274. Istoria del C. Alberoni.

Popoli to Alberoni on this subject, is the master-piece of a courtier. He protests, that he only gave his opinion in favour of war, because he supposed that to be the prevalent wish at court, and pathetically laments that, being detained by the gout at home, he cannot conform his judgment in time, to that of Alberoni. The most amusing part is that, after all, he miscalculated the effect of the Cardinal's letter, and lost favour by his mean retractation. Philip, enraged at seeing his favourite plan thwarted, sent D'Aubenton to Alberoni, with the letter, in the hope that he would disavow it, but Alberoni at once owned the letter, and maintained the sentiments he had expressed. D'Aubenton took his declaration in writing, and then observed, "I decide for war; and I must candidly inform you, that your refusal will exasperate the King, and may expose you to disgrace."

In spite of this friendly hint, Alberoni continued to oppose the project of the war, and endeavour to persuade his master to direct his armament against the Infidels, either of Turkey or of Africa, instead of plunging at once, half armed, into an unequal combat with all the powers of Europe. But Philip would not listen to reason; and Alberoni, rather than resign his power, or as it is more politely expressed, sacrificing himself to his love for his sovereign, applied to the council of state, and obtained their approbation for the war.

Such is the account which Alberoni gives of his own conduct: it is supported by the authority of Mr. Doddington, the English envoy, and by that of two sagacious Sicilian priests, Platania and Carraccioli, then conversant with the state of the court. I must add likewise, that there is nothing in this account which is not conformable to our notions of the

sense and shrewdness of Alberoni. But, on the other hand, I must not conceal that the Marquess of San Phelipe, himself a statesman, and employed on a diplomatic mission at the time, is of opinion that the whole of this scene was a farce played by Alberoni, for the purpose of ridding himself of the responsibility of a war, to which he had previously excited his Sovereigns by every means in his power. That such an artifice is not only not repugnant, but even agreeable to the character of Alberoni, must be confessed; but I own that, upon the whole, I incline to the opinion, that he entered upon the war to please his sovereigns, rather than in accordancy with his own views of Spanish policy.*

From this time, we have to see Alberoni in a new character. Laying aside all his cautious policy, and somewhat of his diplomatic artifice, he endeavoured by the boldness of his enterprizes to astonish Europe, and by the extent and variety of his schemes to remedy the inherent weakness of the cause he had undertaken.

His first care, however, was to provide himself a defence in case of disgrace, or retirement. A short time before, he had obtained an order that the foreign correspondence, instead of being carried on through the secretaries of state, called the *Via de estado,* should pass directly to the King by what was called the *Via reservada,* or private channel. He thus obtained the sole management of foreign affairs. He now insisted upon his immediate nomination as a cardinal. To give effect to his representations, he suspended a reconciliation already settled with the Pope, and prohibited the nuncio,

* See Alberoni's defence in the Istoria del Cardinal' Alberoni, and then compare San Phelipe and Coxe. Other writers have generally gone with the stream, and listened to no doubts.

who had arrived at Perpignan, from entering Spain; while at the same time he sent a messenger to Rome, with an intimation, that he expected the hat as the price of peace. The Pope, unable to resist this peremptory mode of asking a favour, and being assured that the Spanish armament was directed, not against the Emperor, but the Infidels, conferred on Alberoni the long expected honour. In proposing it to the consistory, he declared that he could not resist the in-
July, 1717. stances of the King and Queen of Spain, who had displayed more solicitude for this promotion, than had ever before been shewn, even for a prince of the blood.

Expedition to Sardinia. August 2nd, 1717.

The moment Alberoni saw this favourite wish of his ambition crowned with success, he determined on the sailing of the expedition, which was prepared in the ports of Barcelona; and dispatched his friend and assistant, Don Joseph Patinio, with orders for this purpose. The expedition, which consisted of twelve ships of war and nine thousand troops, immediately put to sea.

Even at this moment, however, Alberoni acted with his usual dissimulation. To the envoy of England, he promised the redress of the grievances of the English merchants, and new securities for commerce.* To the French ambassador, he observed, "It is the general opinion that Spain can do "nothing of herself; yet her preparations alarm the world. "What would have been the consequence if the King had "followed my advice to remain quiet some years, and apply "himself to the restoration of his finances?"† In the course of conversation, he insisted on the necessity of an union between the two Bourbon crowns, and offered to accept the

* Doddington, Aug. 9. † Noailles, Aug. 17.

mediation of France, provided the liberty of Italy and the pretensions of the Queen were secured. To sow distrust among the allies and increase the confidence of the Spaniards, he artfully spread reports that the object of the armament had been secretly communicated to the Regent.

The expedition now occupied the attention of Europe. While the Pope confidently believed it was destined to attack the Infidels, the Emperor, England, and France, waited with anxiety to see the result of preparations they had long viewed with jealousy and apprehension. Their doubts were soon determined, by the appearance of the first division of the expedition in the bay of Cagliari: the second was delayed by contrary winds for twenty days, which gave time for the governor to prepare for defence. Upon the arrival of their comrades, the Spaniards landed six thousand infantry and six hundred cavalry, to besiege the place. After a protracted defence, the Marquis of Rubi, the Austrian governor, abandoned the place, and the garrison surrendered; but two strong posts, Castel Aragones and Alguer remained to be subdued, and the governor directed the operations of the hardy mountaineers against the invading army. In spite of their harassing warfare, and the autumnal diseases of the country, however, the whole island was reduced by the beginning of November, and the Marquis of Lede leaving five thousand men to maintain his conquest, returned with the sick and exhausted remainder of his army to Barcelona.

Great rejoicings took place in Spain upon the capture of Sardinia; Te Deum was performed, the capital illuminated, and the King displayed the highest satisfaction. Alberoni took advantage of the first success of the Spanish arms, to

augment and strengthen his preparations for greater exploits. He increased some of the duties of customs, borrowed money upon anticipations of the revenue, and, in spite of the Pope, who inveighed bitterly against the King of Spain for deceiving him, continued the perception of the ecclesiastical tax, which his Holiness had suspended. The Cardinal made no scruple even of imprisoning or banishing the priests who resisted the payment of the tax. He established founderies of artillery at Pampeluna, revived the armouries of Biscay, procured metal, ships, and naval stores, from Holland; and, with a skill similar to that of Lord Chatham, formed six regiments of the *miqueletes* of Catalonia, a mountainous people, celebrated as excellent marksmen, but hitherto justly considered as disaffected to the existing government. He likewise formed two regiments of the hunters of the Sierra Morena.

The Spanish people, roused to enthusiasm by a feat of arms, magnified as it was by the care of the government, vigorously seconded the activity of Alberoni. Not only were voluntary contributions of money offered to the government, but a new military force, amounting to sixteen regiments of infantry and eight of cavalry, was raised without any difficulty.

Illness of the King of Spain.

In the midst of these preparations, a sudden illness of the King threatened to put an end at once to his life, and the influence of the Queen and Alberoni. His attack was a return of his hypochondriac disorder, but of so violent a nature, that his confessor was summoned at midnight to administer extreme unction. In this state of affairs, reports of the most alarming nature were spread; the people were told that the Queen intended to poison the issue of Philip by his former wife; and

the discontented nobles, roused into new activity, caballed both among themselves, and with the Regent of France. They even went so far as to sign a memorial to the Regent, proposing the deposition of Philip. "The King," they argued, "is either incapable of conducting his affairs, or else he is entirely under the controul of Cardinal Alberoni: in the last case we must deliver him from bondage; in the first, we must place the monarchy in the hands of him who has a right to govern, when the King is incapable."* The King's recovery however broke the neck of all these intrigues, and confirmed the government of the Queen and her minister.

A trifling circumstance, which happened during the illness of Philip, strongly marks the dislike and contempt entertained by the grandees of Spain for Alberoni. The Duke of Escalona, holding the place of Great Chamberlain, had a right, by virtue of that office, to be present at the consultation of physicians, and even to see the medicines administered in his presence. Finding the King entirely secluded by the Queen and Alberoni, he determined to put his privilege in force, and enter the royal apartment. In spite of a previous intimation from the Cardinal, and the resistance of the page in waiting, he burst open the door of the bed-chamber, where he found the Queen sitting at the head of the bed, the curtains drawn, and the Cardinal standing on one side. The Queen sent him a message to retire, but the old grandee, who was much crippled by the gout, still continued to advance, supporting himself on his cane. Alberoni then went himself to meet him, and told him the King desired to be alone. "That is not true," said the Duke, "I am not blind; you did not approach the head of the bed, nor did his Majesty speak to

* Noailles.

you." Alberoni then endeavoured gently to push him by the arm, at which the grandee burst into a violent rage, and spared neither reproaches nor blows. As he was old and feeble, however, he sunk into a chair; but still keeping hold of the Cardinal, he struck him about the head and shoulders with his cane, calling him a little contemptible varlet, and every other abusive name he could think of. The next day, this intemperate Lord Chamberlain was banished from Madrid, and was not recalled for some months; but what is strange to add, the King never heard of any part of the affair, nor of the banishment of the Duke, till after the disgrace of Alberoni.*

Mission of Nancré.

The Regent of France began now to be seriously apprehensive of war, and ordered 30 battalions and 50 squadrons to the Pyrenees, to be prepared for what might occur. Previously, however, to any further step, he sent the Marquis of Nancré to Madrid, to ascertain if any thing might still be done by pacific overtures. His instructions to his ambassadors were similar to those given upon the mission of Louville: Nancré was ordered to establish a close understanding with Alberoni, and to avoid all communication with the disaffected nobles, while St. Aignan, the regular ambassador, was desired to foment and extend, as far as possible, the connexions of the Regent with the malcontents. What the Regent intended by this double dealing is not very clear; and I have the strongest doubts whether such a bye-path policy, much as it has been admired and followed by those who think themselves professed statesmen, be half so prudent as the open, broad, straight highway of honesty. At best, it is but a counterfeit wisdom, a cunning expedient, in the hands of

* St. Simon.

a weak prince to ward off, for a time, the blows of superior force; and therefore utterly unworthy of a great nation. In this case certainly it was not successful. Alberoni, who, as an Italian, was at least equal to the native of any other country in intrigue, turned the batteries of the Regent upon himself, and made a parade of his intimate correspondence with the French minister, to sow jealousy among the grandees, and in the bosom of the British ministers. He even spread a report that the Princess Orsini, and M. Orri, both odious to the Spaniards, were to be restored by the Regent's influence.

March 17, 1718. Message of the King of England.

Very different was the conduct of the government of England. In a message to the House of Commons, the King declared that the negotiations in which he was engaged would be greatly promoted by an increase of his naval force, and expressed a hope that they would provide for an augmentation of the number of seamen. The Commons promised to comply with this request; a fleet was fitted out for the Mediterranean to maintain the peace of Italy, and its destination and purpose unreservedly imparted to Monteleon, the Spanish ambassador, whose angry remonstrance did not for a day delay its equipment. At the same time Colonel Stanhope was ordered to repair to Madrid, to be followed by Lord Stanhope himself. If the British ministers were right in opposing the Spanish projects, there can be no doubt that this open display of force was the best means they could employ to effect their object.

Philip and his minister were equally mortified and provoked at this open opposition from a power they had taken so much pains to conciliate. Alberoni, playing his last

stake, wrote to Mr. Doddington, who was now living as a private gentleman in London, to inform him, that a list of duties had been made out, but not finally signed, by which all the advantages promised to the English were withdrawn. At the same time he said he could not believe that the English nation would relinquish their commercial advantages, to concern themselves in the affairs of a Prince in whom they had no interest: he complained that the ministry of London had become German, and that in all the cabinets of Europe, "policy had given place to the caprice of a few individuals, who, without rhyme or reason, and perhaps for their own private interests, cut and pare states and kingdoms as if they were Dutch cheeses."

Negociations.

No longer relying on the acquiescence of England, the Cardinal now bent all his efforts to supply her place by more distant and less important alliances. He opened a communication with Ragotski, the exiled Prince of Transylvania, and offered him money sufficient to pay a force of 30,000 Turks, which the Ottoman Porte had prepared to place under his command. By this means he hoped not only to secure a diversion in Transylvania against the Emperor, but to induce the Porte to continue the war in which he was engaged. But the Sultan listened rather to the advice of the ministers of England and Holland, who wished him to make peace with the Emperor; and the only effect of the Spanish mission was to scandalize the Christian world: for it was spread every where on the continent, that the King of Spain had entered into an alliance with the Turks against the Emperor, and the Imperial ambassador at Rome made a formal complaint on the subject to the Pope. Alberoni

stoutly denied the fact; nor perhaps would the piety of Philip have permitted him to send a formal proposal to the Porte to enter into an offensive alliance against a Christian power.* But at all events it was clear that the intention of Alberoni was to produce indirectly the same effect; and the Pope gave so much credit to his accusers, that after investing the Cardinal with the bishopric of Malaga, he refused to institute him into that of Seville, which fell vacant soon after; giving, as a pretext, that it was not usual to pass so soon from one bishopric to another. Alberoni, who had resigned the see of Malaga, was much provoked by this step; the Spanish ambassador remonstrated against it as contrary to the rights of the King of Spain; all Spanish subjects were ordered to leave Rome, and commerce was entirely suspended.†

The Prince upon whose assistance Alberoni now chiefly relied was the Duke of Savoy, called at this time King of Sicily. The Abbé del Maro, the representative of the court of Turin, at Madrid, was authorized to offer his master twelve thousand infantry and three thousand cavalry, together with a subsidy of a million of reals, to enable him to conquer the Duchy of Milan, on condition that he would yield Sicily into the hands of the King of Spain.‡ The Duke of Savoy hesitated a moment; he knew that Sicily was lost to him, and he greatly coveted Milan; but upon striking the balance, he saw that the force of Spain was so inferior to the com-

* San Phelipe, indeed, says, he could not do so, as it is a maxim of the Spanish monarchy not to make peace with Infidels, and that the war had been carried on since Don Pelayo, that is for more than nine centuries, without intermission. Yet frequent truces had occurred in the course of this long war, and some precedents might have been found for the alliance now suspected.

† San Phelipe, t. ii. 170.

‡ San Phelipe, t. ii. 173.

bined strength of England, France, and the Emperor, that he determined to reject the offer. With his usual dissimulation, however, he pretended to accept it, and even sent an agent to Madrid, but the terms he asked were absurdly extravagant; and at the same moment he applied to the court of Vienna for the hand of one of the Archduchesses in marriage.

Intrigues in the North.

Thus baffled on every side to which he turned himself, Alberoni looked to the north, with the hope of raising an enemy to the Emperor among those distant powers. It so happened, that at this time both Peter the Great and Charles the Twelfth were highly provoked with the King of Great Britain, who had resisted the attempts of Russia to obtain a footing in the empire, and had accepted from the King of Denmark, Bremen and Verden, originally Swedish possessions, conquered by Denmark during the captivity of Charles. As the price of these cessions, a British fleet had appeared in the Baltic, and effectually protected Denmark against the attacks of Sweden. Charles the Twelfth was not a sovereign to bear patiently with such injuries. He caballed with the English Jacobites, and shewed himself disposed to grant them assistance; but his intrigues were developed and defeated by the arrest of his ministers Goertz in England, and Gyllenborg in Holland. This vigorous step roused him to a pitch of fury, of which Alberoni took advantage, to make a reconciliation between Charles and Peter, and unite them both in a project for placing the Pretender on the throne of England. In furtherance of his purpose, he sent the Duke of Ormond into Russia to negotiate a marriage between the son of the Chevalier, and Anne, the daughter of the Czar. This project did not take effect; but the mediation of a Spa-

nish agent produced a meeting of Russian and Swedish ministers in the isle of Aland, when preliminary articles of peace were signed. By the conditions there agreed upon, Charles was to yield to Russia the territory on the shores of the Baltic, and in return was to be assisted in the conquest of Norway, and the recovery of Bremen and Verden by the Russian arms. Finally, the united forces of both sovereigns were to join with those of Spain in restoring the exiled Stuarts to the throne of Great Britain.

In the mean time the Emperor was acting in complete concert with the government of England; and the Pretender having contracted a marriage with the Princess Clementina Sobieski, the Imperial government, to the great scandal of the Catholic world, ordered the Princess to be stopped at Inspruck, upon her journey to meet with her betrothed husband, and confined her in a convent. May, 1718.

The vigour of the Spanish preparations roused a corresponding energy in the councils of the allies. Ministers were named by the Emperor and the Venetians to negotiate a truce with the Turks: Mr. Sutton was sent by England to Passarowitz to mediate between the belligerent parties, and a strong Austrian force was transferred from Hungary to Lombardy. Stanhope and Dubois arranged the terms of a new treaty, to which the Emperor acceded, and which, from the accession of the Dutch, was afterwards called the Quadruple Alliance. By these terms the King of Spain was to restore Sardinia to the Emperor; Philip was to confirm the renunciation of the French succession, and the King of France of the Spanish: the Emperor was to acknowledge Philip as King of Spain; and Philip, in his turn, was to yield

Quadruple Alliance. August 3, 1718.

his right to the reversion of Sicily to the Emperor, to whom that island was to be immediately transferred; the Duke of Savoy was to receive Sardinia as a compensation for Sicily; the Emperor was to acknowledge the son of the Queen of Spain as successor to the states of Tuscany and Parma; but these were to remain feudal states, and a garrison of six thousand Swiss was to occupy the strong places of the two duchies. Finally, the term of three months was to be allowed for the accession of Philip and the Duke of Savoy; after which all the force of the contracting parties was to be used to extort their acquiescence.

Before the formal signature, which did not take place till August, these terms were communicated to the court of Madrid. But Philip saw an insult to his dignity in this attempt to give the law to him without previous concert, and he was encouraged to resistance by the Great Duke of Tuscany and the Duke of Parma, who, though both of them willing to make Don Carlos their heir, could not bear that the choice should be dictated by foreign powers. Animated by these feelings, Philip directed his minister to return a dry and haughty answer to the allies.

It must be confessed that the treaty of the Quadruple Alliance shews, in the contracting powers, rather the consciousness of force than the sentiment of justice. The Duke of Savoy had received, by the treaty of Utrecht, the dominion of the island of Sicily; to deprive him of it without adequate compensation, or with so slight an equivalent as Sardinia, was robbery and spoliation. Again; the Duke of Tuscany enjoyed his sovereignty as emanating from the free republic of Florence: that foreign powers should name his successor and

degrade his state, on the pretext that Tuscany was a fief of the empire, was a manifest violation of his rights. All that can be said in palliation of this treaty is, that the territories to which it referred, if not apportioned by treaty, would become the object of a war, and that peace being necessary to Europe, it was better to come at once to the conclusion, even though the injustice might thereby become more glaring, than to involve afresh the whole world in a bloody and ruinous contest.

In the mean time Alberoni had dispatched from the port of Barcelona the great expedition intended for the conquest of Sicily. It consisted of twenty-two ships of the line, three merchant ships armed as men of war, four gallies, and three hundred and forty transports. On board of these were embarked thirty thousand infantry and cavalry, provided with one hundred pieces of heavy cannon for sieges, forty mortars, upwards of two thousand artillerymen, sappers, and engineers, and one thousand five hundred artillery mules. Never was an army better provided both with warlike stores and provisions. The fleet was commanded by Don Antonio Gastanieta, a good seaman, but an untried officer; the army by the Marquis of Lede. The flower of the troops who had served in the succession war were employed on this expedition. Don Joseph Patinio embarked on board the fleet, with full powers from the Cardinal to direct the expedition in case of discord between the two chiefs, who were ordered to do nothing without his consent. June 18, 1718.

About the same time Earl Stanhope repaired to Madrid, to try one more effort at conciliation. Alberoni sent him a passport, which he had desired, but told the French minister,

that his master would rather consent to eternal war, than the propositions of the Quadruple Alliance. "Should Stanhope attempt to give the law here," he said, "he will be ill received."

Before Lord Stanhope reached Madrid, Admiral Byng, with a fleet of twenty sail of the line, arrived off Cape St. Vincent. He dispatched a messenger to Colonel Stanhope, who had preceded his brother at Madrid, to acquaint him that he was instructed to promote all measures for composing the differences between the King of Spain and the Emperor; but that should his Catholic Majesty not accept the mediation of the King of England, and persist in attacking the territories of the Emperor in Italy, in that case he was ordered to maintain the neutrality of Italy, and oppose force to force.

Colonel Stanhope immediately communicated this letter to the Cardinal. Indignant at the menace, Alberoni warmly replied, "My master will encounter all perils, and rather be driven from Spain than recall his troops, or consent to a suspension of arms. The Spaniards are not to be frightened; and I am so confident of the courage of our fleet, that if your Admiral should think proper to attack it, I shall be in no pain for the result." To this angry speech Stanhope made no other answer than by presenting the Cardinal with a list of the British fleet. Upon which Alberoni, still more provoked by the coolness, than the menace of the English minister, snatched the list, tore it to pieces, and trampled it under foot. The only word he could be brought to say was, that an answer should be given in two days. With his usual art he delayed this answer for nine days, and then sent a short note, saying,

that the Chevalier Byng might execute the orders he had received from the King his master.*

In the mean time the Spanish fleet had reached the coast of Sicily, where the inhabitants were anxiously awaiting their arrival. The ancient government of Spain, tyrannically severe in repressing religious or political freedom, had been, when even the desire of those benefits was extinct, an easy and indulgent despotism; an undue exercise of authority on some subjects, had been counterbalanced by a lax administration of law upon all others. In her distant possessions, especially, the arm of the executive (feeble even at home) was scarcely felt; the rich, enjoying an impunity of vice, and the people, paying very moderate contributions to the mother country, were alike satisfied and grateful. This fact, if it speaks more for the weakness than for the kindness of the government of Madrid, yet redounds much to the honour of the goodnature and disinterested integrity of the Spanish governors in Sicily. For the same neglect which permitted the Sicilians to live unwatched, and unvexed by the royal authority, would have allowed the Viceroys to exercise the tyranny for which a proconsular authority is proverbial. Arrival of the Spaniards in Sicily,

The Duke of Savoy had commenced his administration in a very different manner. A careful and exact demand of all his rights, provoked a nation accustomed to license; and they called that severity tyranny, which in fact was justice.†

Hence, the Spanish army was received with general joy by the people of Sicily. The troops disembarked on the 1st of July 1st.

* "His Catholic Majesty has done me the honour to tell me, that the Chevalier Byng may execute the orders he has received from the King his master." signed, Alberoni.

† San Phelipe, t. ii. 179.

July within four leagues of Palermo, which the governor abandoned, leaving 1500 men in the castle. After thirteen days of open trenches the castle likewise surrendered. In the rest of Sicily the success of the Spanish arms was still more easy. The people of Catania rose and made themselves masters of their city for the Spaniards; Syracuse was taken possession of by a detachment of the fleet; Termini was captured after a few days siege; the people of Messina rose against their governor and obliged the garrison, of two thousand five hundred Piedmontese, to take refuge in the citadel; the Spaniards immediately repaired there, and quickly made themselves masters of some outworks of the enemy.

Such was the state of affairs when Admiral Byng arrived in the Bay of Naples. His first step was to send an officer to the Marquess of Lede, informing him of his orders, and proposing a suspension of arms. This offer was rejected; but the Spanish admiral, uncertain what to do, lost three days in hesitation, and asking advice of Patinio. Thus it generally happens, that two joint commanders of an expedition bandy responsibility from one to the other, till the opportunity for
August 9th. successful action is completely lost. On the 9th of August Admiral Byng made the Torre del Faro; and finding that the Spanish admiral had left Messina the day before, in order to get through the narrow strait, he immediately sent back some German troops, which he had undertaken to convoy from Reggio to Messina, and made sail after the Spaniards. The Spanish fleet in the mean time retired towards Spartivento without making a press of sail; much to the advantage of their dignity, but greatly to the hazard of their safety.

On the 11th in the morning, at daylight, the two fleets were mingled together, and the rear guard of the Spaniards found itself near the land, at some distance from the main body. Admiral Byng immediately crowded sail with the view of cutting off this squadron, against which he detached Captain Walton, with seven sail of the line. The Marquess Mari, a Genoese, who commanded the division, seeing himself cut off, ran his ships on shore, where some of them were burnt by the Spaniards, others taken by the English. Admiral Byng with the rest of the fleet pursued the main body of the enemy, and coming up with them about two o'clock, a close engagement commenced. The Spanish ships, without order or direction from their commander, were attacked singly by the English; and after an obstinate defence the whole fleet, with the exception of four ships of the line and six frigates, which made good their retreat to Malta, was either captured or burnt.

Victory of Admiral Byng. August 11th.

According to the account sent home by Admiral Byng, of the twenty-one ships of which the English fleet was composed, not one was taken or destroyed, while the Spaniards lost twenty-three men of war, besides other vessels, with five thousand, three hundred, and ninety men, and seven hundred and twenty eight pieces of cannon. The letter of Captain Walton, announcing that he had taken four Spanish ships of war, and burnt four ships of the line, is a curious example of brevity; it runs thus:

Sir, We have taken and destroyed all the Spanish ships and vessels which were upon the coast, the number as per margin. I am, &c. G. Walton.

The defeat which the Spaniards sustained upon this occa-

sion, is to be attributed not to any want of courage or discipline, for the crews of each ship fought with desperation, but to the hesitating councils of their commanders, the superior naval skill of the English, and the bad condition of the Spanish men of war, which were chiefly merchant vessels, and unfit to carry the weight of metal with which they were laden. In true policy, the Spanish commanders ought to have sent away their fleet as soon as the army was disembarked, or at all events to have retired to Malta as soon as the English appeared at Naples. Spanish writers alledge, indeed, that the English admiral did not clearly intimate to the Spanish, that he was ordered to commence hostilities. The English, on the other hand affirm, that the Admiral's own Captain was charged to inform the Marquess of Lede, that should his proposal of an armistice be rejected, he would, in pursuance of his directions, use all his force to prevent further attempts to disturb the dominions his master had engaged to defend. Be this as it may, it is clear that the Spanish admiral ought to have foreseen the probability of hostilities; that he ought to have done every thing in his power to have avoided the chance of an attack; and that, at all events, he should not have exposed himself to be destroyed in a running fight, in which skill and experience were so greatly on the side of the English.*

Notwithstanding this naval victory, the Spanish general carried on the siege of the citadel of Messina with such vigour, that the governor surrendered the place by capitulation on the 29th of September. Admiral Byng, after putting into Syracuse for a short time, continued cruizing during

* San Phelipe, t. ii. Hist. Register.

the winter, or at least for the greater part of it, in order to prevent the Spaniards from receiving supplies, a service in which he was only partly successful. After this, he returned to Mahon to refit for the spring.

When Lord Stanhope arrived at Madrid, he was at first favourably received by Alberoni, but after a short delay the Cardinal declared, in answer to a threat of hostility from France, that his sovereign would never lay down his arms till Sardinia and Sicily were ceded to Spain, and until the Emperor, besides indemnifying the Duke of Savoy for the loss of Sicily, had engaged to maintain only a limited number of troops in Italy.*

Lord Stanhope at Madrid.

These terms form so extravagant a demand on the part of Spain, now threatened with hostility by all Europe, that it seems difficult to believe Alberoni can have been blind to the consequences of so much passion and presumption. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Lord Stanhope representing, that he believes him extremely desirous to accommodate matters. "He complains bitterly," adds Lord Stanhope, "of the King's obstinacy, who is at present more governed "by his personal animosity against the Emperor and the "Regent, than by any reasons of state. He represents him, "besides, as exceedingly jealous and mistrustful of all about "him, insomuch that, for a considerable time, no person has "ever spoke to the King and Queen asunder; nor does any "other minister ever dare to speak but in the presence of "the King, Queen, and Cardinal, who, by what I can judge, "are every one jealous of each other. The Cardinal shed

* Coxe.

" tears when I parted with him; has promised to write to " me, and to let slip no occasion which may offer of adjusting " matters."*

Spanish victory in Sicily.

The Spaniards continued to have some success in Sicily. In the month of October they besieged Melazzo: the Germans, who had eight thousand men in the place, attacked them when only six thousand of their troops had arrived, but after a severe action were driven back with a loss, according to the Spanish accounts, of three thousand killed and wounded, and a thousand prisoners; among the latter was the Count Vetterani.† Other accounts indeed make the loss of the Germans much less. This victory added greatly to the confidence of the Spaniards.

But while the valour of the Spaniards shone with a lustre of which there have been few examples since the bright period of the monarchy, the rashness of their councils, and the unsubstantial texture of their alliances, were becoming every day more apparent. Victor Amadeus, who had for some time coquetted with Alberoni, now denounced the King of Spain as a violator of the treaty of Utrecht, agreed to the terms of the quadruple alliance, and in the month of November was acknowledged at Vienna as King of Sardinia. At the same time the Emperor brought such numerous reinforcements into Sicily, that the Spaniards were unable even to acquire the place of Melazzo, the scene of their recent victory. In the north, all their hopes were blasted in a single moment.

Death of Charles the Twelfth.

In the beginning of December the King of Sweden was killed before the fortress of Frederickshal, in Norway: it is uncer-

* Coxe, vol. ii. 8vo. † San Phelipe. Historical Register, p. 718.

tain whether by the hand of an enemy or a traitor. With him vanished all the hopes which had been formed of the co-operation of the northern powers: Sweden changed at once her internal despotism and foreign war, for a constitution at home and peace abroad; while Russia was awed into neutrality by the appearance of a British fleet in the Baltic.

Conspiracy in France.

Among the favourite plans of Alberoni, one, from which he cherished the greatest hopes of success, was a plot for depriving the Duke of Orleans of the Regency of France, and transferring his power to the King of Spain. The persons most attached to the memory of Lewis the Fourteenth were united in a cabal against a government which opposed his grandson in concert with England; and so strong was the feeling of the court, that Marshal d'Uxelles, minister for foreign affairs, declared he would sooner lose his right hand than sign the treaty of the quadruple alliance. It soon appeared, indeed, that far from being willing to lose his right hand, he was not prepared to lose even his place, for he signed the treaty he had denounced; but others were not so prudent. Even St. Simon, the truest of the Regent's friends, said to him, "If the King of Spain should enter France unarmed, and "throwing himself on the nation demand the Regency in his "own right, I confess that, however attached to you, I should "take my leave of you with tears, and acknowledge him as "Regent. If I, devoted as I am to you, thus think and feel, "what can you expect from the French in general?"*

Upon this foundation was built a conspiracy, at the head of which was placed the Duke, or rather the Duchess of

* St. Simon, i. vii. p. 148.

Maine. Of the particulars of this plot some account shall be given in another place; at present, it is sufficient to say that it was defeated, partly by the imprudence of the leaders, and partly by the active police of Dubois. Few punishments were inflicted, and all danger to the Regent's government was completely dispelled.

French Declaration of War against Spain.

The discovery of this plot produced an open rupture between France and Spain. The King of Spain, in a public manifesto, denounced the usurped authority of the Regent, and appealing to the feelings of the French nation, called upon them to acknowledge him as the lawful representative of Majesty, during the minority of his nephew. The Regent replied by a public declaration of war, accompanied by a manifesto, complaining that Spain had broken the neutrality of Italy, in contravention of her former engagements, and had endeavoured to disturb France by secret conspiracies. The King of Spain soon published an answer, full of complaints of all the allies, but especially of England; and as the Regent had directed his manifesto more against Alberoni than the King, the Spanish memorials, on the other hand, drew the most offensive comparison between Alberoni and the Regent, which it is supposed was never forgiven by the latter.

Although the Regent had not hesitated to declare war, the commencement of hostilities was a moment of anxiety and embarrassment for the French government. Marshal Villars, the most celebrated and popular commander in the service, not only refused to accept a command against the King of Spain, but made an appeal to the Regent and his council, earnestly recommending a reconciliation between two sove-

reigns so nearly connected by blood and interest. In the frontier provinces large numbers of mal-contents were ready to join the standard of Philip; the army itself was tainted with disaffection, and an indefinite longing for change. To second the good will of his adherents, the King of Spain quitted Madrid at the beginning of the spring, and on placing himself at the head of his troops published a declaration to the French nation and army on whose behalf he declared himself to have taken up arms. In this appeal, he called upon the French soldiery to repair to his standard, and exhorted them to throw off "an obedience forcibly extorted *by the pretended Regent,*" while he promised them, in return, the favour of the King when he should come of age, and those honours and rewards which they would justly be entitled to expect. This appeal was answered by the Regent in a letter to the Duke of Berwick. The Regent, however, gave a far better answer to Philip than could be conveyed in words; he was aware, that for certain maladies of the mind there is no cure so good as occupation, and that to a discontented French army, in particular, no satisfaction can be offered so acceptable as to lead them into the presence of an enemy. Marshal Berwick, a general of the highest reputation, was placed at the head of an army of thirty thousand men, and directed to march into Spain. The Duke of Berwick has been unjustly blamed for accepting a command which obliged him to serve against his benefactor. In his office of governor for the King, in the province of Guienne, the example of disobedience to orders, would have been no less than treason against the government by which he was employed; besides, when fairly considered, the King of Spain had more obligations to him, than he to

April, 1719.

Marshal Berwick commands the French Army.

the King of Spain; he had gained a great battle, and preserved a large territory for Philip, and had received, in return, the title of grandee and the order of the golden fleece; the balance at least is surely not against him. It is even said that, on commencing this campaign, he sent back the golden fleece to the King of Spain, who however refused to receive it.*

The plan of operations of Marshal Berwick was to extend a force along the Pyrenees sufficient to preserve the frontier from hostile incursion, and at the same time to make a strong impression on Spain itself. For this purpose he proposed to undertake the siege of Pamplona; but as the materials could not be prepared in time, the sieges of Fuenterrabia and St. Sebastian were resolved upon instead. Previously to his arrival, however, the French army crossed the Bidassoa, and took Passages, where they burnt six ships of war, which they found upon the stocks. When Berwick joined the army, he commenced the siege of Fuenterrabia in form, and three weeks after opening the trenches, two breaches being made, and a lodgement established, the enemy surrendered. On the day before the surrender of the place, the King of Spain advanced with his army to Lesaca, within two leagues of Irun, but finding that the town was taken, he retired on the following day. Philip was greatly mortified at this result. He had meditated an attack upon the French at the head of his own army, which did not amount to half the number of his opponents, and had only been prevented by the entreaties and remonstrances of Alberoni. "Hitherto," said the Cardinal, "I

Takes Fuenterrabia. June 18th, 1719.

* San Phelipe.

" have passed for the author of the war, and the disturber of
" the peace of Europe. I have drawn on myself the odium
" of the whole world, and it was a sacrifice to which I cheer-
" fully submitted, and shall submit; but I cannot see your
" Majesty, at the head of a handful of men, attempt to suc-
" cour Fuenterrabia, besieged by a more powerful army, ad-
" vantageously posted. This is to encounter certain ruin; to
" expose yourself to a most dreadful catastrophe. As I am
" blamed for every thing, it would give colour to the general
" accusation, and it would be said, that no better result could
" have been expected from the counsels of a madman."*

So angry was Philip at being thwarted in his schemes, that had it not been for the Queen, he would have immediately disgraced Alberoni; nay, so confident was he of the attachment of the French army, that had not an artifice of the Cardinal delayed the execution of an order, he would have marched with a small escort, and thrown himself unprotected into the midst of the French troops. Perhaps, however, in so desperate a war, such chivalry would have been less imprudent than the more sober extravagance of his minister.

Capture of St. Sebastian.

After the siege of Fuenterrabia, Berwick pursued his designs against St. Sebastian. He placed his batteries along the river Gurumea; but as he was not able to approach nearer than one hundred and eighty toises from the place, the breach was not practicable till the 1st of August, when the governor capitulated. Berwick obliged the garrison to retire into the citadel, where he bombarded them with shells, with such success, that they surrendered on the 19th, and received the honours of war.

August, 1719.

* Istoria del Cardinal' Alberoni, P. ii, p. 117.

Before the fall of St. Sebastian, seven hundred French troops had been embarked on board an English squadron, and sent to Santonia, where they destroyed all the magazines, and burnt seven unfinished ships upon the stocks. Colonel Stanhope was present at this operation, which many of the French considered a sacrifice of French policy to the interests of England, who, they said, had no other object in the war than to destroy the naval power, and supplant the commerce of Spain.*

As it was not consistent with the maxims of war in these times for an army to advance, leaving behind it so strong a fortress as Pamplona, Marshal Berwick, after the capture of St. Sebastian, withdrew across the Pyrenees, and directed his march towards Catalonia. Philip left his army, and returned in bitter disappointment to Madrid. To increase his mortification, the states of Guipuzcoa desired the protection of France, and requested of the Duke of Berwick that, in any treaty of peace, England and France would provide for the maintenance of their privileges and liberties. Their overture was rejected, however, by the Duke of Orleans, as inconsistent with the declared objects of the war.

In Catalonia, the French soon made themselves masters of Urgel, and advanced to the siege of Roses. But the extreme badness of the weather, and a tempest which destroyed a great number of their vessels laden with stores and provisions, obliged them to abandon the enterprize, and Marshal Berwick, after placing his troops in winter quarters, returned to Paris.

Fall of Urgel. August 31.

If Alberoni was unsuccessful in his attempts to overturn

* San Phelipe. Duclos.

the government of France, he was no less disappointed in his endeavours to shake the establishment of the House of Hanover in England. The Pope, either weary of the presence of the Pretender, or really anxious to obtain a triumph of the Catholic cause, insinuated to the King of Spain, through D'Aubenton, his confessor, that the presence of the exiled prince in Madrid would give new hopes to his adherents. Alberoni eagerly listened to these insinuations, and the Duke of Ormond, repairing to Madrid, was instructed to confer with the Cardinal on the means of making a successful invasion of Great Britain. When the Dutch took alarm at his appearance in Madrid, as likely to endanger the Protestant establishment, which they had guaranteed, Alberoni assured them that the Duke of Ormond had merely sought refuge in Spain for the sake of personal security. In the meantime he hastened warlike preparations in the ports of Galicia and at Cadiz, under the pretence of sending re-inforcements to Sicily. The Chevalier himself quitted Urbino by stealth, and embarking at Netteno, landed at Cagliari in March. From thence he took his passage to Roses, in Catalonia, and proceeded to Madrid, where he was received with great cordiality, and treated as King of Great Britain. A long list was presented to Alberoni of persons of note in the three kingdoms, who were ready to join his standard as soon as he should land.* On the 10th of March a fleet, consisting of three men of war and twenty-one transports, sailed from Cadiz, having on board five thousand men, a great quantity of ammunition, and thirty thousand muskets; they were directed to

Expedition against England. March 10, 1719.

* San Phelipe.

join the rest of the expedition at Corunna, and to invade at once the kingdoms of England and Ireland.

The allied cabinets were not slow in taking measures to defeat this expedition. The King of England offered, by proclamation, a reward of ten thousand pounds to any one who should apprehend the Duke of Ormond. Troops were ordered to assemble in the north and the west of England, while a strong squadron, under Admiral Norris, was equipped and sent to sea to meet the Spanish fleet. At the same time the Duke of Orleans ordered ships to be prepared at Brest to join the English squadron, and offered twenty battalions to serve against the Pretender by land. The Dutch, according to treaty, furnished two thousand men, and six battalions of Imperialists were sent from the Austrian Netherlands. These extensive preparations were much more than sufficient for the purpose. The Spanish fleet, under the Duke of Ormond, was dispersed and disabled by a great storm off Cape Finisterre, which lasted twelve days. Two ships only arrived in Scotland, with the Earls of Mareschal and Seaforth, the Marquis of Tullibardine, three hundred Spaniards, and arms for two thousand men. After a fruitless attempt to defend the passes of the mountains, by the aid of a small body of Highlanders who joined them, the Spaniards surrendered, and the rebel chiefs retired to the western isles, from whence they escaped to the continent.

Dispersed.

The arms of Spain were no less unfortunate in Sicily. After various battles, in which the Spaniards in vain displayed the utmost valour and constancy, against an enemy always increasing in number, the Imperialists laid siege to

The Spaniards lose Sicily.

Messina; the Marquess of Lede so long hesitated whether he should march to its relief, that, at length, the place yielded before he arrived. The court of Vienna received this news with the utmost joy, and it is said that, flushed with the fulness of their success, in Sicily, they proposed to their allies to diminish the equivalent offered to Spain by the treaty of London; but if so, the courts of France and England, anxious for a speedy peace, rejected the proposal.

To complete the misfortunes of Spain, Holland had at length renounced her neutrality. For a long time the advantages of the rich commerce between Spain and her American colonies, carried on under the neutral flag, had deterred the Dutch from taking any part in the war. Beretti Landi, the Spanish minister at the Hague, was so pleased with this neutrality, that he caused a medal to be struck, representing the heralds of England, France, and Austria, sitting in a car with only three wheels, and holding out their hands to Holland, who stood on one side refusing to them the fourth: the legend was '*Sistit adhuc, quartâ deficiente rotâ.*' At length, however, the pressing instances of France and England overcame the interested reluctance of the Dutch, and they acceded to the alliance. Three months, however, were allowed by Holland, to enable Spain to accept the profered conditions; and Alberoni took advantage of this overture to propose terms of peace. The conditions offered by him were, Sicily for the Emperor, with the right of reversion to Spain; the succession of Tuscany and Parma for Don Carlos; commerce to be placed on the footing established by the treaty of Utrecht; Gibraltar and Minorca to be yielded by England. These terms were evidently ill-suited to the low

Accession of the Dutch to the Quadruple Alliance, Feb. 16. 1719.

condition of Spain, and the allies on their side, were preparing the way for peace in a very different manner.

Dispatch of Earl Stanhope to Dubois. August 22, 1719.

In August, 1719, Lord Stanhope wrote to the Cardinal Dubois, to express his opinion, that they would act wrong if they did not consolidate the peace by the removal of the minister who had kindled the war. That it was not to be imagined he would ever lose sight of his vast designs; and if compelled to accept peace, it would be with a resolution to seize the first opportunity of vengeance, whenever the recovery of his strength, and the remissness of other powers, should give him hopes of better success. That he was versed in all negociations, and would take advantage of past experience to improve his connections and form them with more caution. "When he is reduced," added Lord Stanhope, "let us not suffer him to recover. Let us exact from Philip "his dismission from Spain. Let us hold forth this example "to Europe, as a means of intimidating every turbulent "minister, who breaks the most solemn treaties, and attacks "the persons of princes in the most scandalous manner."

The proposal contained in this dispatch is almost without an example in the history of Europe. To make the dismissal of a minister, by an independent sovereign, a condition of peace, seems at first sight an open violation of the rights of states to govern themselves. As an individual, however, has an undoubted right to the management of his own property, but no right to set up a nuisance to annoy his neighbours, so no country has a right to use its independent authority in such a manner as to threaten the security of surrounding states. Nor can it be denied that Alberoni, by exciting civil war in England and France, had fairly raised the question in the

minds of statesmen, whether his elevation was compatible with the tranquillity of those countries. As to the policy of their conduct, it appears to me that England was animated by a just view of national interest, but that France was stimulated by the personal vengeance of the Regent. We have seen that the stile of the Spanish memorials was extremely offensive to that prince; but there was an older and a juster cause for his resentment. Early in the public career of the Cardinal, the Regent had written a private letter to Philip, which for security he had sent to D'Aubenton, the confessor. But that which was intended to make the effect of his measure certain, was the circumstance which made it fail; for D'Aubenton, thinking Alberoni too well fixed to be shaken, carried him the letter of the Regent. Alberoni, listening to passion rather than reason, wrote in revenge a letter to a friend at Paris, in which, after declaring his respect for the Regent, he said it grieved him to hear the Dutch and English say that he aspired to the crown, and that when his means were prepared, "the person of the King would give "him no trouble." This letter he desired might be shewn to the Regent, who probably cherished a bitter hatred in return. Whatever we may think of the motives, however, the proposal of Stanhope is a high testimony to the genius and resources of Alberoni.

Intrigues at Madrid.

The downfall of the Cardinal being resolved upon by the allies, the execution of the project, instead of being made a point of public negociation, was brought about by secret intrigue. The Regent applied to D'Aubenton, the confessor, with better success than before, as Alberoni had at this time offended him, by an unsuccessful attempt to put another person

in his place. His representations were seconded by Platania and Caraccioli, the two Sicilian priests before mentioned, and by Ripperda, who was shortly to play so distinguished a part on the theatre of Spanish politics. The intrigues of these artful politicians were aided by the insinuations of a person of less ostensible, but more dangerous importance. Laura Pescatori, who had been the nurse of the Queen, now filled the situation of *assa feta,* or first woman of the bed chamber, a place which, in Spain, was accompanied with the influence consequent to the solitude and retirement in which the Queens of Spain were always kept. Alberoni, dreading the long-lived affections of childhood and of country, had done all in his power to prevent the arrival at Madrid of any of the natives of Parma. Laura quickly perceiving his jealousy through the veil of his politeness, openly declared herself his enemy, took advantage of her condition and favour to load the Cardinal with every kind of coarse raillery, and always spoke of him to the Queen in terms of antipathy and contempt.* Her zeal was quickened and her invective sharpened by liberal promises of money from Dubois.

The disasters of the Spanish arms prepared the mind of the Queen to listen with complacency to these perpetual attacks. Thus, while the Cardinal removed from the King's presence every person of consideration who might be hostile to him, and even, in contravention of established forms, prevented the secretaries of state from approaching him, an obscure female peasant of an Italian village was secretly undermining all his measures, and preparing the way for the pacification of Europe.

* St. Simon. Duclos.

While the French agency was thus employed, the British court was not idle. Lord Peterborough, who happened to be at Paris, undertook a journey to Italy under the pretence of amusement, but in reality for the purpose of gaining the Duke of Parma, the father of the Queen of Spain. This he found an easy task: the enmity of the Emperor was dangerous, and the behaviour of Alberoni, since his elevation, had not been satisfactory to his former master. The Marquess Scotti, who had formerly been employed by Alberoni, was now sent as the envoy of Parma to Madrid, and fifty thousand crowns were furnished him by the allies, as a reward for the services he was expected to perform. No sooner had he arrived at Madrid than, by means of Laura Pescatori, he obtained a private audience of the Queen. In this interview he declaimed against the mischievous policy of Alberoni; and assured the Queen, that if she would contribute towards his dismissal, he was authorised by the English and French governments to assure her of a more certain and substantial aggrandizement for herself and her family, than she could expect even from the success of his projects. Finally, he placed in her hands letters and papers from the Regent and the Duke of Parma, confirming all that he had said.*

It is affirmed that Alberoni, foreseeing the approaching storm, would now willingly have retired, had he known where to find a secure retreat. Be that as it may, the King, completely won by the promises and the papers of Scotti, finally determined to dismiss his minister. On the evening of the 4th of December he transacted business with the Cardinal for the last time, but without letting drop a hint of his intentions.

Dismissal of Alberoni. Dec. 4th, 1719.

* Coxe. San Phelipe.

On the following morning he set out for the Pardo, leaving a decree, written in his own hand, to the following effect; "that in order to remove all obstacles to a solid and durable peace, he had determined to remove from the management of affairs the Cardinal Alberoni, and for this purpose ordered him to leave Madrid in eight days, and the kingdom of Spain in three weeks." The Cardinal, after a vain attempt to obtain an audience, wrote a letter to the King, asking for some mitigation in his fate. Whether the King read this letter is uncertain; the only answer the fallen minister received was an order to obey the royal decree.

Before Alberoni left Madrid, and as soon as his disgrace was known, the nobles, gentry, and clergy, crowded to attend his last levee in numbers, such as he had never witnessed even in the height of power. This demonstration has been attributed by his friends to esteem and admiration; by his enemies, to curiosity and compassion. If we may form a conjecture, it is probable that the greater part of those who paid their respects to him when fallen from power, would have been sorry to see him re-established, but that they wished to shew their esteem for a minister who, in spite of the extravagance of his projects and the arrogance of his manners, had undoubtedly raised the character of Spain in Europe, and, in the gratification of his private ambition, had flattered that pride of national glory of which no people are more susceptible than the Spaniards.

Subsequent life of Alberoni.

Alberoni left Madrid on the 12th of December, taking the road to Barcelona. At Lerida he was overtaken by an officer commissioned to search for papers. It has been said, that the will of Charles the second was amongst the papers missing

and recovered; but no good authority can be quoted for this report. In the course of the search, Alberoni took up a bill of exchange for twenty-five thousand doubloons, and tore it to pieces in the presence of the officer. In his passage through Catalonia, he was attacked by a party of *miquelets*, who killed a servant and a soldier of his escort, while he himself escaped to Gerona on foot, and in disguise. As soon as he arrived in France, the Chevalier de Massieu was ordered to join him under the pretext of civility, but in fact to draw from him his secrets. The Cardinal easily penetrated the intention, and told Massieu that he knew his object: he did not however put himself under any restraint on the subject of the King and Queen, whom he bitterly reproached with their ingratitude. "If the Queen," he said, "should find a good general, she will disturb all Europe; she can easily govern her husband, who, after he has said in a low voice, 'I chuse to be master,' always ends by obeying, and requires nothing but a wife and a prayer book." Alberoni added, that far from having excited the war, he had always opposed it; that the Duke of Maine had not appeared in the conspiracy of Cellamare, but that the Duchess was a wicked devil; and that the greater part of her partisans, whom he would never name, were not worth half a crown. The ministry, which he left in Spain, he represented as composed of ignorant men, who would be forced to pay deference to all that might be suffered to approach their weak King. He suspected that they desired to have him assassinated by the *miquelets*, in making him pass through Catalonia, whose rebellion he had punished, instead of by Pamplona, as he had requested.*

* Duclos. San Phelipe. St. Simon. Three errors are committed by Coxe in

On the first of February he embarked at Antibes with the intention of going to Rome, but at Sestri he received an intimation that he would not be permitted to enter the ecclesiastical territory, or be allowed to receive the inauguration of his See of Malaga. From Sestri he wrote four letters containing a laboured apology of his whole conduct of the administration of Spain.

While such was the progress of Alberoni, the King and Queen of Spain pursued him with a bitterness and animosity fully equal to their former partiality. To the allied powers, they declared that the whole blame of the war was to be attributed to his turbulent spirit. In the second audience which they granted to the British ambassador, they protested that Alberoni had always deceived them; that he had shown them forged letters for the purpose of ruining those whom he suspected; that his suspicions usually fell upon persons of character; and that there was no crime of which he was not capable, even of poisoning and assassination. They therefore entreated the King of England to employ his interest with the Regent and the Emperor, for the purpose of prevailing on the Pope to deprive him of the purple, and retain him in perpetual confinement.* In the mean time Philip transmitted his accusations to Rome, and the Pope

his account of these transactions. 1st. He says, that St. Phelipe doubts the fact of the will of Charles II. being found among the papers of the Cardinal, whereas he never mentions it. 2nd. He makes Alberoni tear a bill for twenty-five thousand dollars, instead of doubloons, which are sixteen times as much. 3rd. He attributes to Duclos and St. Simon an assertion, that Alberoni offered to disclose to the Regent his connexions with the disaffected, whereas Duclos asserts precisely the contrary.

* Coxe, Memoirs of Spain. Hardwicke papers.

through Cardinal Imperiali, applied to the senate of Genoa for his detention. The charges, which Philip was not ashamed to bring against his late minister, were, 1st. That he employed the money which he derived from the crusades and other ecclesiastical taxes, in making war against catholic princes. 2nd. That he undertook a war against the Emperor, at the moment when engaged in a contest with the Turks, to the great detriment of Italy and Europe. 3rd. That for his own private interests, he had prohibited the subjects of Spain from soliciting bulls for the benefices conferred by the Pope.*

Alberoni, finding no safety from his persecutors, went across the bay to Spezzia, directed his course through the Appenines disguised as a merchant, and on the fourth day of his journey disappeared. Switzerland which, in all past times honourably distinguished itself by giving refuge to foreigners persecuted by their political opponents, was the country to which he retreated. He at first repaired to Lucarno; and such was the hospitality observed towards him, that some attempts having been made to arrest him, he was transferred by the Regency of Coire to a pleasant castle in the Alps, and the strictest orders given to watch against a surprise.

A year after this, upon the death of Clement the Thirteenth, Alberoni re-appeared at Rome: on this occasion a prodigious concourse awaited his arrival, and accompanied him to his house with continued acclamation and applause. The papal tribunal, however, condemned him to retire into a convent for three years, which were shortened to one by the Pope. In 1725, he was in such favour at Rome, that the English

* Coxe. Mem. of the Kings of Spain.

ministry thought proper to use all their influence to prevent his return to Spain. On the formal application of the British envoy, the Queen replied, much to the honour of Alberoni, "I shall be far from consenting to the restoration of a minister, who did not allow me sufficient to provide common necessaries."

In 1732, Alberoni retired to Placentia, where he was graciously received by the Infant Don Carlos, and permitted to found a seminary, which he endowed at considerable expense. Here he seems to have devoted himself to those studies in which, a mind like his, might find not only amusement, but occupation. In the first days of his disgrace he had kept by him a copy of *Thomas à Kempis de Imitatione Christi*, which is still preserved in the Ducal library at Parma, with marginal notes of his journey, written in his own hand. But this extreme devotion to heaven, produced by his disgrace at court, seems to have lasted no longer than the first feelings of mortification and disgust at the world, in which he was no longer prosperous. During his subsequent life, he applied himself with earnestness to the perusal of Livy, Tacitus, and other immortal writers of ancient history.

In 1746, his seminary was occupied by the Imperial forces, to favour their attack on Placentia. Alberoni took refuge within the city, and is described by a French officer, who saw him and conversed with him, as living in a single room, where he had kindled his fire with an apricot tree, which he had himself cut down, and was long cooking his dinner with his own hands. Though then eighty years of age, he conversed with great energy, speaking alternately in French, Italian, and Spanish, and supporting his opinions by frequent quotations

from Tacitus. He dwelt with particular pleasure on his plans for the restoration of the Pretender to the throne of England. He was at this time an object of great veneration to the Spanish troops, whose military fame had faded from the period when he directed their arms.

At the close of his life, Alberoni was appointed by Benedict XIV. vice Legate of Romagna. In this situation he drained the marshes in the vicinity of Ravenna, and excavated a great number of canals to carry off the superfluous waters of the neighbouring torrents into the Adriatic. Not satisfied, however, with this useful and meritorious work, he projected the reduction of the republic of San Marino to the obedience of the Holy See. But just as he was accomplishing his object, the sound of the word liberty, in the celebration of the mass, roused the zeal of the people; they marched to the defence of their little town, and Alberoni was defeated in overturning the liberties of San Marino, as he had formerly been in subverting those of England.

Character of Alberoni.

Alberoni was in person of low stature; his features were far from handsome, and his head was too large for his body. His voice was melodious, his look piercing, and he acquired among the Spanish grandees an air of dignity, which suited ill with the original coarseness and vulgarity of his manners. He was proud, hot and revengeful by nature, but extremely skilful in modulating his passions to the key which his interests required. Indefatigable in application, he frequently employed himself in business for nineteen hours out of the twenty-four. He is remarkable for having united the most lofty designs, with a strange degree of low cunning in carrying them into effect; and perhaps merits better than any

one the title of Jupiter Scapin, which has been applied to a far greater man of our own day. Although capable of conceiving the most vast and magnificent projects by the vigour of his imagination, he seems to have been destitute of elevation of soul; and whether cooking Italian dishes and uttering coarse jokes for the amusement of the Duke of Vendome, or planning the overthrow of the governments of England and France to gratify the passions of Philip, he appears to have been always intent upon his own elevation, at any cost, and by any means.

Review of his Administration.

In his foreign policy, Alberoni evidently aimed at gigantic objects, with very inadequate means, or at best with only a slight chance of success. If he must be acquitted of the charge commonly brought against him, of provoking a hopeless contest, he is only so much the more blameable for having wantonly sacrificed the blood and treasure of Spain, and disturbed the peace of Europe, for the sake of preserving his place. Nor does he deserve our pity when, in return for the sacrifice of his own conscientious opinions, we see him abandoned and persecuted by the very sovereigns, to gain whose favour he had swerved from his duty as the minister of a great nation. It cannot be denied, however, that the spirit displayed by Alberoni might, in a better cause, have revived the greatness of Spain.

In his government of the interior, Alberoni formed many plans, some of which he carried into execution. He promoted projects for improving the ports of Cadiz and Ferrol, and established new docks and arsenals in those and other ports. In the short period of his administration, fourteen men of war were launched, and as many more were nearly completed. He

founded a seminary at Cadiz for five hundred pupils to be instructed in navigation, and revived the foundery of artillery and the manufacture of small arms. With respect to commerce, he destroyed most of the inland custom-houses, abolished the internal duties of Valencia, and dispatched intelligent engineers to the different provinces, to ascertain what improvements could be made in the economical government of the kingdom. With the usual policy of active ministers of those times, he established manufactures of glass, woollens, and linens; and though it must be confessed that his measures, in this respect, tended to furnish the Spaniards with dear and bad articles, instead of cheap and good ones, it is difficult to blame a minister who governed so short a time, and had not particularly studied the subject, for sharing in the prejudices of the age.

Yet it must never be forgotten that Alberoni, while he seemed to promote commerce and industry, had risen to power by favouring that institution, which is the bane of all commerce, and all active exertion of every description. By taking part against Macanaz, he preserved the privileges of the Inquisition, and with them the source of all the misery and degradation of Spain. Let us not be dazzled, therefore, by the brilliant genius of Alberoni; and while we admire the activity and resources of his mind, let us not give our esteem, or the honours of fair fame, to an unprincipled adventurer, whose momentary power shows only the caprice of fortune, the force of intrigue, and the decline of Spain.

After the dismissal of Alberoni, Philip was still unwilling to sign a peace with the allied powers. In reply to the propositions of Holland, he made demands differing but little

in extent from those which had been offered by the Cardinal; thus showing that his late minister had not acted alone, and that his obstinacy had not been the sole obstacle to peace. So long did this resistance continue, that the allies thought it necessary to take new steps for the attainment of their object. While D'Aubenton was employed by the Regent, Earl Stanhope sent his confidential secretary, Sir Luke Schaub, to co-operate with Scotti in the negotiation.

Philip accedes to the Quadruple Alliance.

At length, the resistance of Philip was overcome by the earnest solicitations of the Queen, who feared that if any further time were lost, she should be deprived of all chance of the reversion of the duchies for her son. Philip announced therefore his accession to the quadruple alliance by a royal decree, declaring that he gave peace to Europe at the expense of his interests, his possessions, and his rights.

By this act, Philip renewed his renunciation of the crown of France, and relinquished all claims to the dominions which had been dismembered from the Spanish monarchy. He recognised the Duke of Savoy as King of Sardinia; consented to the transfer of Sicily to the Emperor, and promised

Feb. 1720.

to evacuate those islands within the term of six months. In return, he was acknowledged by the Emperor as King of Spain and the Indies, and the eventual succession of Tuscany and Parma was entailed on the issue of the Queen, on condition that these duchies should never be united with the crown of Spain. In the mean time, in order to secure the possession upon the death of the reigning sovereigns, the fortresses were to be occupied by six thousand Swiss in the pay of the mediating powers. Thus ended the impotent enterprize of Philip.

In order to complete the view of the state of Europe during this period, it is necessary to speak of some events and transactions, which, for the sake of keeping the story unbroken, have been either omitted, or very slightly mentioned.

The Emperor Charles the Sixth, who had with so much difficulty been induced to make peace with France, after the general pacification of Europe at Utrecht, had shewn no less repugnance to the project offered by the maritime powers for a barrier against France. The defence of the Netherlands, by Spain, had been so very negligent, that it was thought absolutely necessary a Dutch force should occupy several of the fortresses on the frontier of France. But the Emperor, naturally enough it must be confessed, felt strong objections both to the admission of foreign garrisons in his towns, and to the payment of a subsidy for their maintenance. At length, at the earnest request of England, he complied with the proposal, and General Cadogan signed a treaty, called, like former engagements of the same kind, the Barrier Treaty; by which it was provided that a body of from thirty to thirty-five thousand men was to be maintained in the Netherlands, of which the Emperor was to furnish three fifths, and the States two; the States were to have the sole right of garrison in Namur, Tournay, Menin, Furnes, Warneton, Ypres, and the fort of Knoque; a sum of five hundred thousand crowns was to be paid yearly by the Emperor for the support of the Dutch troops. Thus, it was imagined, an effectual barrier was provided against the power of France, on the side of Holland, the favourite object of William the Third, and of the defenders of European independence, from the war of 1672. But in fact the barrier, so laboriously provided, was,

Barrier Treaty.

November 15, 1715.

after all, an ineffectual defence. The Emperor became disgusted with a province which he appeared to hold only for the benefit of the maritime powers, and the people of the Netherlands were indignant at seeing themselves forced, contrary to their antient constitution, to pay money without the consent of their own states. It was an additional hardship in their eyes, that the supply was raised for the support of the troops of a government, and a religion, different from their own. Hence, the protection of the Netherlands by Austria was always feeble and reluctant, the statesmen of Vienna scarcely valuing a possession, however rich and valuable, which was encumbered with such a mortgage. They considered, with some appearance of justice, that since the maritime powers had shewn so much anxiety for the defence of the Netherlands, it might be left to them to bear the burthen. Such was the result of the military skill of Marlborough, and the political wisdom of the greatest statesmen of England and Holland!

War between Venice and the Porte.

Before concluding this chapter it will be proper to refer to the events of the war of Turkey, which has been already noticed. The great war of the Spanish succession had scarcely terminated, when news arrived at Venice of an extraordinary activity in the arsenal of Constantinople, and it soon appeared that the Turks had resolved to reconquer the Morea, wrested from their hands in 1685 and the following year, by Morosini. Historians have ridiculed the Ottoman Porte for remaining a quiet spectator of the war of the European powers, and delaying his aggression till peace was re-established; but internal dissensions had hitherto distracted the court of Constantinople; and it would be more reasonable to blame the want of foresight of the Venetians, who

aware, as they must have been, of the designs of the Turks, had left the Morea guarded by a force of only eight thousand men. That peninsula was now invaded by an army of an hundred thousand strong, seconded by a fleet of one hundred sail. A line of fortification which the Venetians had drawn across the Isthmus of Corinth was instantly forced; Corinth, Argos, Napoli di Romania, Modone and Malvasia were taken in a single summer; the whole of the Morea acknowledged the government of the Porte, and in all the course of this conquest not a single instance appeared even of the most common of all kinds of courage; namely, that which is shewn in defending a walled town against a besieging enemy. The island of Candia indeed, under the command of Magno and Giustiniani, offered some resistance, but in the month of November the Turks were completely masters of it, and the Venetians were thus deprived of their last possession in the East.

June and July, 1715.

Fortunately for Venice, her misfortunes, if not her valour, excited the sympathy of Europe. The Duke of Savoy proposed a league in her favour under the conduct of France, and the Emperor, to avoid this unpleasant interference in Italy, took upon himself by treaty, the defence of the Venetian territories. In the mean time Count Schullembourg, with some German troops, was engaged by the Venetian government to defend Corfu: this he successfully performed till the Spanish fleet, dispatched by Alberoni, came to his assistance, and obliged the enemy to raise the siege. The Turks lost fifteen thousand men in this fruitless attempt.

Treaty between Austria and Venice. April 13, 1716.

Before this event took place, a far more important succour had marched to save the Venetian territories in Dalmatia.

Victory of Peterwaradin. August 5, 1716.

Prince Eugene, at the head of an army flushed with victories over the best troops of France, passed the Danube in sight of an hundred and fifty thousand Ottomans, commanded by the Vizier in person, encamped near Peterwaradin. The Imperial commander immediately led his forces against the enemy, and though far inferior in numbers, completely routed him, took fifty standards, two hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, and caused a loss to the Turks of thirty thousand killed, including the Grand Vizier himself. The fall of Temeswar followed this victory, and the whole of Wallachia yielded to the conqueror.

The success of Prince Eugene was not less brilliant the following year. In the month of June he invested Belgrade, a town of great strength, defended by a garrison of thirty thousand men. After two months of blockade, an immense Turkish army advanced to the relief of the place, and stretching from the Danube to the Save, actually besieged the besiegers. Eugene had strongly fortified his camp, and had nothing to fear from an attack; but his situation was unhealthy, and numbers of his troops perished daily by the galling fire of the Ottomans. At length his position was rendered apparently hopeless, by the Turks taking possession of an eminence commanding a bridge over the Save, by which alone he could retreat. But it is not safe to reduce to despair, a general, whose genius stands him in stead of all other resources. Eugene summoned a council of war, which unanimously agreed to his proposal to engage. For this purpose he had a force of less than forty thousand men, with whom he was to attack entrenchments of great strength, defended by an army of two hundred thousand; but his

Victory of Belgrade. August 16, 1717.

name inspired the troops with unbounded confidence, and the memory of repeated victories made the general view his danger with composure. A little before midnight, the signal for the advance of the army was given by the discharge of three bombs. About two, the right wing fell upon the enemy's line,and surprized the guard. But a vigorous resistance was made at some new entrenchments formed by the Turks, and a thick fog adding to the darkness, created confusion in the Imperialists. At length, the fog being dispelled by the rising sun, Eugene saw his right wing separated from the rest of the army, and nearly surrounded by innumerable Turks. He instantly placed himself at the head of the second line, and charged the enemy; a wound which he received in advancing only added to the spirit of his troops, and the Turks fled before him. His right wing thus rescued, Eugene surveyed the entrenchments with the view of directing his army in the most scientific and least dangerous manner; but the troops, animated by what had just passed, rushed on with a force at once ungovernable and irresistible; carried the batteries, and turned the cannon of the Turks with prodigious effect against their own thick and clumsy masses. Before mid-day, the camp, cannon, and intrenchments of the enemy, were in possession of the Imperialists: the Turks ran with such barbarous haste, that those who were in the rear killed their comrades who were before, to clear the path of their flight. Belgrade surrendered the next day to the victorious army.

In the following year, by the intervention of England, peace was signed at Passarowitz between Austria, Venice, and the Porte. By this treaty, Austria obtained the Bannat July 21, 1718.

of Temeswar, Orsowa, Belgrade, part of Wallachia as far as the river Aluta, the two banks of the Save from the Dwina to the Unna, and a part of Servia, marked out by the treaty. Venice, on the other hand, lost for ever the Morea, and only obtained, in return, some places in Dalmatia and Albania, which she had acquired during the war. Thus, if Austria seems to have shewn some generosity in listening to the prayers of Venice, the result shewed that the fruits of her victories were strictly reserved for her own advantage.*

* For this war, see Histoire du Prince Eugene, t. v. Coxe. House of Austria. Daru. Hist. de Venise.

CHAPTER III.

Internal Government of France during the Regency. Characters of the Duke of Orleans and the Abbé Dubois. D'Aguesseau. Scheme of Law. His failure, and flight. Elevation of Dubois. His death. Death of the Duke of Orleans. State of France. General result of the Regency.

Some historians have been so dazzled by the splendour of military achievements, that they have devoted nearly all their pages to the relation of the various accidents of war between contending kings or nations, and it is only by chance, as it were, that the notice of the adoption of a new code, or a total change in the manners of the people, drops from their pen. Yet Livy and Tacitus, the two greatest of all historians, have employed the utmost powers of thought, and splendour of style, to delineate the domestic facts of the republic and empire of Rome. Indeed I am inclined to believe not only that the internal history of a nation is eminently instructive in itself, but that in such a history, if usefully given, may best be traced the causes of those mighty convulsions and revolutions of mastery and dominion, which attract the whole attention of more vulgar observers.

After passing in review the establishment of the liberties of England by the accession of the House of Hanover, and the disturbance created in Europe by the impotent ambition of Philip the Fifth and his Queen, our attention is now to be turned to the internal history of France during the Regency, a

period cherished by many who lived at the time for its pleasures, but execrated by posterity for its vices.

Character of the Regent.

The Duke of Orleans, placed by the consent of the Parliament in possession of an unrestricted Regency, was in person of a middle size, stout, not handsome either in face or in figure, but with an agreeable countenance, and such grace and dignity in all his motions, that the absence of personal advantages was scarcely perceived. He was open, easy, and affable in his manners; his voice was pleasing; he was endowed with a happy memory, a clear judgment, and a natural eloquence, which supplied the place of instruction, giving to his conversation the appearance of being the result of profound and extensive reading. Without losing any of his dignity, he conversed on a footing of equality; and those who knew how superficially he had studied, were the most surprised at his great command of language, and the admirable perspicuity of his understanding. In his disposition he was brave, generous, and humane, never resenting an injury, and viewing the most atrocious designs against his person with an indulgence which, in the opinion of his friends, went even to a fault. He himself was proud of the natural kindness of his heart, and above all things loved to be compared to Henry the Fourth, whom he resembled indeed both in his virtues and his faults, and had he been favoured with the benefit of adversity, might perhaps have equalled in fortune and in fame. In war he shewed great capacity, and was well informed both in the minute details of an army, and in the general merits of a campaign.

With all these great and good qualities, the Duke of Orleans had many and serious defects. His mother, who was fondly attachedto him, used to describe him by saying, that

the fairies had come to the birth of her son, and had each given him a talent or a virtue, till at last one wicked fairy, who had not been invited, arrived, and not being able to take away his virtues and talents, predicted that he would not make a good use of them. The observation thus ingeniously clothed, was a sober and melancholy fact. The Duke of Orleans, endowed with an excellent understanding, had that pliability of disposition, which, while it keeps in the straight path a person bound by strict laws, or dependent upon virtuous superiors, is almost sure, in a man of great station, to be the precursor of a vicious life. He had neither the energy of soul requisite to found his conduct upon principle, nor the moral taste to prefer the upright and the virtuous, to the dishonest and the debased. His education had greatly assisted this original fault of his nature. In his father's court he had learnt a habit of perpetual gossip, and acquired a fondness for little intrigues, and petty treacheries, which he carried with him into the government of the state. In the management of the court, it was his system to repeat to every one what had been said of him by his neighbour; and thus to cause a universal distrust and jealousy, by means of which he hoped to prevent any cabal against himself.* In foreign affairs his conduct had the same double aspect; wheels within wheels, intrigue built upon intrigue, professions of amity to enemies, and acts of hostility to friends; such were his favourite methods of treating with foreign states. In his personal opinions and behaviour, he had the misfortune to be very much guided by the Abbé Dubois, who fastened himself to his fortunes, as dirt attaches itself to a piece of wax.

The Abbé Dubois was a man of as profligate a character Dubois.

* St. Simon.

as ever appeared on the stage of European politics. He was the son of an apothecary at Brives-la-Gaillarde, in the Limousin, and had embraced the church, as the profession the most likely to raise a man of his birth to a level with peers and princes of the land. Early in life he had been sent to seek his fortune in the capital, and had been employed by a doctor of the Sorbonne in a menial capacity. Having gained some instuction, herose somewhat higher, and St. Laurent, the preceptor of the Duke of Orleans, introduced him to that prince when still a boy. Dubois acquired his confidence; and by a happy mixture of talent and address, enabled him to make a display on some public occasion. St. Laurent, who was an excellent and able man, dying shortly after the commencement of his task, Dubois insinuated himself into the place, and soon became the friend, as well as the tutor of the young prince. When Lewis the fourteenth wished his nephew to marry his natural daughter, Dubois was the person who overcame his reluctance; and thus, in some measure, conciliated the favour of the monarch. When the Duke of Orleans, disgusted with his marriage, threw himself into the arms of a mistress, Dubois was the person who assembled in the house of Mme. D'Argenton, the most disreputable society of Paris. In fine, Dubois conducted his pupil into every kind of debauch, and guided his unpractised youth through the paths of sensuality, with all the fastidious discrimination of acquired profligacy. At the same time, as if to drown the voice of conscience, he told him that virtue was a thing which did not exist; that honesty in men, and chastity in women, were mere illusions; that religion was fit to impose only upon fools, and could not bind a Prince of so

much talent and judgment. Dubois was himself an undisguised atheist, and made use of a false theory to support a vicious practice. He never spoke truth; and when his falsehoods were discovered, laughed openly at the accusation. Ambitious, covetous, and libidinous, he sought only to gratify his passions to the utmost, and was not afraid or ashamed of any baseness, any perfidy, any treachery, that were likely to procure for him power, pleasure, or wealth. With this detestable character he was well informed, lively in conversation, and would have been agreeable, had not all his humour and mimicry been directed with some interested view. He had much of the good nature of his master, and was still more indifferent to reputation.

The Duchess of Orleans, mother of the Regent, had asked as an only favour of her son, that he would not employ Dubois. He promised, and broke his promise:—before the end of the year 1715 Dubois was made counsellor of state.

At the commencement of his government the Regent eagerly sought for means of improving the internal condition of the country; and it is said that, for this purpose, he spent three or four hours a day in perusing the manuscripts of the Duke of Burgundy, who had consigned to paper his plans for restoring prosperity to the kingdom.

Appointment of Councils.

One of the first changes made was said to be taken from these manuscripts.* It consisted in placing the administration in the hands of councils, composed of several members; a specious, but not very convenient mode of directing the affairs of a state. The presidency of the council of war was given to Marshal Villars; of the council of finance to the Duke of

* Memoires de la Regence, t. 1, p. 20.

Noailles; of the council of foreign affairs to Marshal D'Uxelles; of the council of conscience to the Cardinal de Noailles; of the council of marine to Marshal D'Estrèes; of the council of the interior to the Duke of Antin. Let us turn our attention to the principal of these councils.

Every one was rejoiced to see the Cardinal de Noailles placed at the head of the church, by whose myrmidons he had so long been worried. Two days after the funeral of Lewis the Fourteenth the Regent ordered the liberation of the Jansenists, who were in great numbers in the prisons. The Marquess of Aremberg, who had been twelve years detained in the Bastile for having aided Quesnel to escape from the prison of Malines, excited, in a special manner, the attention and interest of the public. But the rejoicings of private families over their fathers, husbands, and brothers, and of congregations over their pastors, thus happily restored to them, were more lively and more lasting. Never perhaps did prisons send forth so great a number of virtuous men, as were delivered on this occasion. The same measure, executed with equal wisdom, took effect in the provinces. The Jesuits stormed, but stormed in vain. The disputes on the subject of the constitution Unigenitus still continued, however, in spite of the pacific temper of the Regent. In the beginning of the year 1716 the Regent wrote a letter to the syndic of the Sorbonne, desiring the doctors to preserve silence on this affair.* But some of the bishops still persisting in their opposition, wrote to demand explanations from Rome; Rome, as usual, refused to give any.

The Jesuit Le Tellier had appeared at first undismayed by

* Mémoires de la Regence, t. 1, p. 69.

the victory of the adverse party. He went with confidence to the Regent, and asked what he was to do till the young King should require his ministry as confessor, the post to which he had been appointed by the late King. The Duke of Orleans answered coolly, "That does not concern me; address yourself to your superiors." Soon afterwards he was exiled to Amiens, whence he was transferred to La Flèche, where he died in 1719. His morose imperious temper never left him, and was the torment of his convent, as it had before been the misfortune of an empire.

Finances. Duke of Noailles.

The council of finance, of which the nominal chief was Marshal Villeroy, was presided over by the Duke of Noailles, a person whose character, from the part he played in these times, deserves some attention. He possessed considerable abilities for war and politics, and transcendent talents for a court. In society, he had the art of touching with grace and delicacy the driest topics, and of making his own opinion prevail, while he always appeared to follow that of the person with whom he spoke. He was active, restless, and ambitious, had no other rule of conduct than a constant pursuit of his own interest, and spared no means, either of servility to superiors, or calumny against rivals, for obtaining his private ends. When Lewis the Fourteenth, angry with his uncle, took an objection to the name of Noailles, the complaisant courtier said, he had learnt from his ancestors to have no other will but that of the sovereign, and was quite ready to adopt any other appellation. When Madame de Maintenon was in power, he married her niece and affected an extreme devotion, which won the heart of that pious lady. After the death of Lewis he changed his friends and his

manners; kept a dancer of the Opera; and when the Regent went to a ball intoxicated, Noailles was sure to stagger.* Such was the man who was put at the head of the finances, where he was supposed not to be free from corruption, and to consult his own interest at least as much as that of the state.† His agreeable conversation and accommodating humour were no doubt his passports to the favour of the Regent.

The finances were, in truth, in a most alarming state. The capital of the public debt amounted to 3000 millions, the revenue to 145 millions, and the public expenditure to 142 millions a year. A more desperate situation cannot well be imagined. When it was brought before the council, the Duke of St. Simon, a man of strict honesty, and severe opinions, proposed a no less desperate remedy. He advised the Regent to convoke the States General, and laying before them the accounts of the kingdom, declare at once that a public bankruptcy was the only remedy for so prodigious an evil. Before we discuss the justness of such advice, let us reflect for a moment on this calamitous result of the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth. An age of glory abroad, and of splendour at home, celebrated above all for the grandeur of the monarch, ends with a proposition to declare the state bankrupt, and make the sovereign abdicate his power! This fact alone tells more against the government of Lewis the Fourteenth, than a thousand laboured panegyrics can weigh in his favour.

Bankruptcy proposed.

* St. Simon. Duclos. Bolingbroke's Letter to Wyndham.

† His chief assistant in the finances, was M. Rouillé de Coudrai, a very honest man, but fond of wine to a vice. One day that he was speaking with an habitual frankness in the presence of the Regent, Noailles said to him, "M. Rouillé, "il y a ici de la bouteille."—"Cela se peut, M. le Duc, mais jamais de pot de "vin." The retort was felt by all, and applauded.

If we now pass to consider the value of the advice given, it will be found more easy to declaim against it, than to shake it by argument. The state had engaged itself for more than it could pay; a full satisfaction of all demands was impossible. How had this calamity been brought about? By mismanagement of the finances, and by running into expenses, without the means of providing payment. What better remedy then, than to call the nation together, to lay the whole case before them, and to provide, with their assistance, a settlement of past claims, the most consistent with justice, and such a provision for future controul, as might prevent a like misfortune? The step, it is true, was bold, and even hazardous; but in the existing good temper of the nation, and popularity of the Regent, it is very possible a course might have been traced out, by which the public money would have been placed under regular inspection, and all subsequent convulsion prevented, without materially diminishing the prerogative of the King. An assembly of the States General in 1715, would have met with a far different spirit from that of the States General of 1789. Some concessions certainly it would have been necessary to make, but with a people so devoted to their kings as the French then were, these concessions might have been exchanged for such an arrangement of the taxes, as would have made the revenue greatly the gainer. In process of time the States General might have acquired the power of the purse, and have fixed upon that fulcrum the liberties of their country; but the people would then have been gradually prepared for freedom, and worthy to enjoy it.

It seemed the more probable that the Duke of Orleans would have listened with favour to the proposition of St.

Simon, as he always professed a great admiration of the English government, and was accustomed to quote, with praise, an anecdote of Charles the Second, who being much disturbed by the attentions paid to one of his mistresses by the Grand Prieur of France, was yet unable by the laws to send him out of the kingdom, and was obliged at length to apply to Lewis the Fourteenth for his recall. But this admiration of freedom in the Regent, probably did not extend to practice; and he would have been loth to let escape from his own hands, the power which he thought might elsewhere be wisely restrained. On this occasion, at least, he listened with favour to the Duke of Noailles, who strongly opposed the project of St. Simon, and represented it as fraught with calamity and mischief. This decision, I own, appears to me to have been most unfortunate for France.

Measures of Finance.

The measures which were adopted to supply the deficit, betokened little real wisdom, and still less integrity. The first of them was a recoinage, and alteration of the standard, by virtue of which, those who brought their money to the mint received only four fifths of it back, with the same denomination as before. Seventy-two millions of livres were gained by the treasury in this manner; but it is evident, that, besides the opportunity afforded to foreigners who were debtors to Frenchmen, to perform the same operation, and make the same gain; the general disturbance of trade, and the injustice done to creditors, both public and private, more than counterbalanced any immediate advantages that might accrue from this favourite fraud of the government of France.

The next operation of the council of finance was to order

a *visa,* or examination of all the outstanding debts of the state. A complicated instruction was framed, according to which the creditors of the state were to be divided into different classes, and paid in different proportions: the original creditors were to receive the most; those who had bought stock merely with a view to profit, were to receive only one fifth of the original capital; a distinction at once ignorant and unjust. By this means, however, three hundred and thirty-seven millions of paper bonds were annihilated, as either forged or surreptitiously obtained, or *usurious.* This last clause is convenient and comprehensive; but to annul by force, the engagements which had been contracted by folly, seems little better than an open and direct bankruptcy.

The operation of the *visa* led to the establishment of a commission, or *chambre ardente,* instituted with the avowed object of enquiring into the misconduct of the loan contractors during the late reign. This measure was extremely acceptable to the people; and they were delighted to see the punishment of death denounced against the money lenders, whom, with the usual prejudice, they viewed as the cause of all their past and present misery. But both the people and the court soon relaxed their severity; the one from compassion, and the other from corruption. The researches of the *chambre ardente* did not produce more than fifteen millions of livres. As usual, the weak were oppressed, and the rich escaped with impunity. Some few were arbitrarily taxed to a large amount; but in general the great spoilers made their bargain with the courtiers, and escaped for a moderate ransom. One of them had been taxed at twelve millions of livres; Count —— called upon him, and offered to procure his discharge for one

hundred thousand crowns; "You are too late," said the financier; "I have made my bargain with your wife for fifty thousand."* Thus the nobility and courtiers sold the public interest, and the monied men were too happy to be allowed to buy it. Nor did the people complain of this notorious scandal. "These men," they said, "have filled themselves with "our money, and will require less in future; but if a new set "were brought in their place, they would be ravenous with "hunger, and we should be much worse off." Thus the spoils of the money lenders were divided among the favourites of the Regent, and the country gained nothing by the persecutions which had been directed against them.

Manners of the Court.

The Regent's manner of living differed greatly from that of the old court. He rose at no very early hour, heavy with the fumes of wine of the night before. During the forenoon he gave audiences, and saw the chiefs of the councils and the foreign ministers. At two, or half past, the whole court were admitted to see him take his chocolate. After this came the council, the opera, visits to the King, to his mother, and his daughter, the Duchess of Berry. The evening always ended by a supper, sometimes with his mistresses and a chosen party of courtezans, sometimes with the Duchess of Berry, two or three ladies of the court, and ten or twelve of the most profligate men in Paris, whom he called his *roués*. This denomination, which he explained by saying that they were fit for the wheel, and they by saying that they would suffer the rack for his sake, was applied to Broglie, brother of the

* Vie de Philippe d'Orleans, t. i. p. 171, par M. de la Hode. The Keeper of the Seals having accepted from a rich contractor a magnificent pair of silver wine-coolers, was called by the punsters *Garde des Seaux*.

first Duke of that name, the Duke of Brancas, Canillac, Nocé, Biron, and some other young men whose extravagance of debauch has failed in securing them an equal immortality. At these repasts the dishes were always prepared on the same floor, often by the hands of the guests, and were always exquisite. It may seem trivial to remark, that these suppers were the origin of the mode of life, and the art of cookery, which have since prevailed among the aristocracy of Europe. Great entertainments indeed were known from the commencement of modern history, and Lewis the Fourteenth was well acquainted with the perfection of plain cookery; but the Regent, and his daughter, were the first who combined a small chosen society with that refinement of preparation and variety of dishes, which afterwards distinguished the suppers of Paris, and is now to be found in the dinners of all the capitals of Europe.

This first specimen, if agreeable, was not moral. The guests of the Regent discussed all subjects, religious and political, the lapse of a lady, the faults of a minister, or the nature of the soul, with equal freedom. As the wine circulated, the conversation became more noisy and more indecent. The Regent spared no one, and was not spared. One night Madame de Sabran, who was a constant guest, said to him, "I believe, after God had made the rest of mankind, he took a separate piece of clay, out of which he made princes and footmen." The Regent thought the joke excellent.

The mistresses of the Duke of Orleans were known to all the world, and proclaimed by himself with a freedom, which his mother often blamed as indiscreet and improper. "I assure you," answered her son, "you are mistaken; the

women of our day are not like those of former times, and are glad to have their intrigues known." The principal and favourite mistress of the Regent was Madame De Parabére, whose chief merit was a taste for joyous suppers and noisy parties, in which her lover delighted. She was foolish, and never spoke of the affairs of state; an additional merit in the eyes of the Regent, who could not bear, in women, either sentiment or politics. He used often to complain to his mother, who relates the anecdote, that his former mistress, Madlle. Seri, required him to love her with an ardent and exclusive passion, of which he was quite incapable. He complained no less of those of his mistresses who endeavoured to make their intimacy with him a step to power. One day that Madame de Sabran was entering upon political subjects, he took her to a glass, and said, "Look at yourself, and then say if one ought to speak politics to so pretty a face."

Persecutions of the Protestants. 1716.

In 1716 the tribunals of Guienne found an opportunity to exercise the laws concerning the Protestants with all the bigotry of the late reign. Some protestant meetings were held at Montauban and at Clerac; they were discovered by the authorities in the very act of singing psalms: the military were called in, several were arrested, and the remainder dispersed without resistance. Mock trials and vindictive sentences followed. A wine-house-keeper, who could scarcely read, was condemned to the gallies for life as a minister of the obnoxious sect. A widow was convicted of having received thirty persons in her house, who had been guilty of singing psalms. A silk-weaver was condemned to the pillory, and to be flogged in the market-place, for having had in his house an apprentice accused of reading at the protestant meetings. The

Duke of Orleans being warmly solicited by his mother for a pardon, at first declined to interfere, but he afterwards ordered sixty-eight of these unfortunate people to be released from the gallies.*

D'Aguesseau 1717.

An occasion happily presented itself in the beginning of the year 1717, to reward a man of talents and of virtue. Voisin, the chancellor, the creature of Madame de Maintenon, who had made the will of Lewis the Fourteenth, and is believed to have sold the secret to the Duke of Orleans, died suddenly. The Regent immediately named D'Aguesseau to the vacant post. D'Aguesseau was the son of a virtuous magistrate, and had been educated with the utmost care, to fit him for the first offices of the law. As Advocate General, he had shewn so much eloquence and ability, that Denys Talon, one of the judges, said, "I should wish to finish as this young man begins." He was endowed with a mind at once retentive and creative, both large enough to compass the immense science of the law, and ready in applying its knowledge to new cases. Besides being an excellent classical scholar, he was a universal reader; and of so great application, that he was wont to say, that a change of study was itself a recreation. He was totally devoid of that spirit of intrigue which disgraced the age; above corruption in his judgments; luminous, and sometimes witty in conversation, even in his temper, and good-natured in his disposition.

With all these qualifications, D'Aguesseau had some defects, which caused the disappointment of the hopes of those who expected to see in him the greatest of chancellors. He had a natural predilection for the profession of the law,

* Mémoires de la Régence, t. ii. p. 6.

which made him regard almost with horror, any reversal of a decision which had been once given in the Parliament. Nay, his partiality embraced not only the reputation, but the interests of all who had followed the same studies with himself. Being asked one day if he had never thought of a method to prevent delay and extortion in legal proceedings, he replied, "I have often considered of it; but when I reflected on the "number of barristers, attornies, clerks, and bailiffs I should "ruin, I had not the heart to proceed." Besides this defect, he had a natural subtlety of understanding, which suggested to him a thousand objections to every solution of a legal difficulty. This original disposition was fortified by the habits contracted during many years of experience as Advocate General, an office, in which it is usual to place the arguments on both sides in the strongest possible light, before coming to a conclusion. Hence, the eloquence and knowledge of D'Aguesseau were much more celebrated than his promptitude of decision, and his talents were far more admired by the world in general, than by the suitors in his court. The delay and expense of legal proceedings became more ruinous than ever; the life of man wore out before his rights were ascertained; and justice, thus dearly purchased and long withheld, was often, when given, useless to either party. Upon being once reproached by a friend with his procrastination, D'Aguesseau replied; "When I consider that a decision of a "chancellor is a law, I think it allowable to spend a long "time in reflection." If long reflection brought with it surer judgment, the Chancellor might be right; but it may be doubted, whether a mind fairly impressed with all the circumstances of a case, and having brought all its powers to bear

once or twice upon the subject, can improve its judgment by any subsequent meditation. The same understanding does not mend its reasoning at every operation on the same matter; it does but repeat, with some changes and illustrations, its former process. Finally, D'Aguesseau, weak in character as he was wavering in mind, allowed himself, as we shall soon see, to be made the instrument of a profligate administration; and men who were incapable of understanding or admiring his virtues, covered themselves with the glory of his name to screen some of the worst acts of a flagitious government.

Memorial of the Princes of the Blood.

Although every thing reposed in obedience around the Regent, he was pleased to observe the princes of the blood raise fresh disturbance on the subject of the legitimated princes. The Duke of Bourbon, the Prince of Conti, and the Count of Charolois, presented a memorial to him, desiring that the edict by which Lewis the Fourteenth rendered his illegitimate sons capable of succeeding to the throne, might be revoked.* They represented, that the laws of the monarchy made legitimacy a necessary qualification for the crown; that the disposition of Lewis the Fourteenth deprived the nation of "the most glorious of its rights, that of disposing of "itself in case of the extinction of the royal family."† To add to the flame, the *Ducs et Pairs* demanded that the right of precedence granted to the legitimated princes, should be likewise revoked. Instigated by St. Simon, these noblemen pretended to a special rank in the state, which entitled them to the honours, if not to the power, of the great vassals of the crown in feudal times. The Duchess of Maine, on her side, (for the Duke was a cypher) encouraged the Parliament, the

* Duclos. † Vie de Phil. d'Orleans, i. 177.

nobility, and even the Knights of Malta, to present counter memorials. She caused researches to be made, at which she herself assisted, into all the old laws of France, chronicles of Europe, ancient history, oriental voyages, and Hebrew customs, to establish a case in favour of illegitimate royalty. In the memorial, thus laboriously prepared, the legitimated princes appealed to the States General, of which they demanded an immediate convocation; and declared that, at all events, no decision on the subject could be legal, till the majority of the King.

The Regent, who, partly from his desire to prolong the quarrel, and partly from tenderness to his wife, the sister of the Duke of Maine, had appeared insensible to the storm, now thought it was time to wake from his slumber. He severely condemned the memorials of the nobles; put six of them who had petitioned for the States General in the Bastile, and peremptorily forbade any assembly of the nobles or Knights of Malta. The nobles in vain alledged that they had met in 1649, to ask for the suppression of the *tabouret*, granted to two ladies. The Regent pursued his path, and removed the plea of the princes to the council of Regency, whence, on the 2d of July, 1717, issued an edict, annulling the acts and declarations of 1714 and 1715, and depriving the legitimated princes of the quality of princes of the blood, and the right of succeeding to the throne. They were allowed to preserve their honours in consideration of several years of possession. The demand of the *Ducs et Pairs* was not decided upon. What is most remarkable in the edict on this subject perhaps is, the confirmation it gives of the doctrine put forth by the princes of the blood. In case of the extinction of the royal family, it

Decision of the Regent. July, 1717.

is declared, "that to the nation itself would belong the right "to repair that misfortune by the wisdom of its choice; and as "the fundamental laws of the kingdom make it happily impos- "sible for us to alienate the domain of the crown, we make it "our glory to acknowledge that we are still less free to dispose "of the crown itself."* This acknowledgment of a popular right, in the midst of a thousand acts of arbitrary power, forms a curious anomaly; in other respects, the right spoken of being dormant as long as the reigning family should continue, was totally unimportant to the nation.

This was not the only affair of the kind. The privilege of giving the first vote in the Parliament, the right of walking first in a procession, the form and place of the *tabourets de grace*, were matters of grave discussion among a people whom Lewis the Fourteenth still inspired, but no longer controuled. Any one looking only to the trifling nature of these disputes, might infer that the kingdom was flourishing and happy; but the French have the gift of being frivolous in the depth of misery, and gay in the midst of horror.

System of Law.

But it is time to speak of the fortunes of a man whose madness, if madness it were, was caught first by the government, and lastly by the whole people of the capital. I allude to the celebrated scheme of Law.

John Law, of Lauriston, was descended from a respectable family in Fife. His father being a younger brother, had exercised the trade of a goldsmith at Edinburgh, and had acquired wealth sufficient to enable him to buy the estate of Lauriston, situated in the parish of Cramond, upon the Firth of Forth, on the borders of West and Mid-Lothian. He

* Vie de Phil. d'Orleans, i. 194.

made a journey to Paris to suffer the operation for the stone, which, however, was performed so unskilfully, as to occasion his death in that city, about the year 1688.

Previous life of Law.

The son, John Law, was born at Edinburgh in the year 1671. He was distinguished when young by his handsome person and foppish dress; so much so as to be called *Jessamy John*, and *Beau Law;* he was no less distinguished, however, for his proficiency in geography and algebra. He was at first taken into the counting house, but on the death of his father he quitted business entirely, and went to London, where he lost so much money at play, that upon receiving from his mother a loan of considerable amount, he conveyed to her his paternal estate of Lauriston. He was more fortunate in gallantry, and gained the reputation of being extremely well received by ladies of the first rank and society in London. Even here, however, his success was the source of misfortune; for a love affair led him into a duel with a Mr. Wilson, whom he killed on the spot. It is said that the cause of this mishap was a preference shewn him by Miss Elizabeth Villiers, afterwards Countess of Orkney, a lady of more wit and accomplishments than beauty, but celebrated as having gained the heart of William the Third. Law was put into prison, but made his escape, and was advertized in the Gazette with the following description; "Captain John "Law, a Scotchman, lately a prisoner in the King's Bench "for murder, aged twenty-six, a very tall, black, lean man, "well shaped, above six feet high, large pock holes in his "face, big nosed, speaks broad and loud," &c. Law, however, got clear off, and travelled in many foreign countries, where he made himself acquainted with the history of their

trade and commerce, and more especially with the regulations of the bank of Amsterdam. What is singular is, that he is said to have acted as secretary to the British resident in Holland, without receiving his pardon. In the year 1700 he appears to have been again in Scotland, for before the end of that year, he published at Edinburgh an introduction to his "Proposals and Reasons for constituting a Council of "Trade." This was followed by a project, which made great noise at the time, for establishing a land bank; the notes of which were never to exceed two thirds of the value of the land, upon ordinary interest, or were to be equal in value to the land, with a right to enter into possession in a certain time. This scheme, though supported by the court, and by a neutral party called the Squadrone, headed by the Duke of Argyle, was rejected; the Parliament passing a wise and manly resolution, "that to establish any kind "of paper credit, so as to oblige it to pass, was an improper "expedient for the nation." After this failure Law again left his native country, and travelled in Italy, Flanders, Germany, France, and Hungary. Resuming his habits of gaming, he won immense sums wherever he went, so much that, in 1714 he is said to have been worth £110,000. When at Paris, he frequented the chief gambling houses, and seldom carried less than an hundred thousand livres of gold about his person. On his second visit to Paris, he proposed a scheme of finance to Desmarets, the controller, but it is said that Lewis the Fourteenth asking if he was a Catholic, and being answered in the negative, declared that he would have nothing do with a heretic. This story, however, merits little credit.

At length the time arrived when his speculations were to

be tried on a great scale. Law communicated his scheme, or system, to Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, who told him that his dominions were too small for the execution of so great a design, but advised him to go to France, saying, that if he knew any thing of the disposition of the people of that kingdom, he was sure they would relish his projects. Law took his advice, and set out for Paris. Not long after his arrival Lewis the Fourteenth died, and was succeeded by the Duke of Orleans, to whom Law had formerly been known. The vivacity and spirit of the Scotch adventurer, his love of play, gallantry, and intrigue, and above all the romantic grandeur of his scheme of finance, aided by a natural eloquence, facility, and clearness, soon gave him an influence over the mind of a Prince who loved pleasure, and was desirous of doing great things without giving himself trouble. The glory of war had been drained by Lewis the Fourteenth to the dregs, and the situation of the world, as well as that of France, closed that avenue to fame; in such a position, reputation could only be acquired by restoring prosperity to the trade and agriculture of the country. But in ordinary course this was a tedious process; and the Regent readily embraced a scheme, which promised to pour forth plenty as from an enchanted cup, to create riches out of nothing, and to pay off the debts of the state without leaving any burthens on the debtor, or committing any injustice to the creditor. For such was the brilliant prospect opened by Law, to those who shutting one eye, applied the other to his raree-show exhibition.

Encouraged by a favourable reception, Law translated his Essay on Money and Trade into French, and presented two memorials to the Regent. In these and other papers, he enlarged on the advantages of credit; maintained that the

trade and commerce of every country required more currency than specie could supply; and produced the examples of Genoa, Amsterdam, and Great Britain, to shew the advantages of a paper money. He proposed to set up a bank in France, which should have the management of the whole of the royal revenues, and issue paper both on that and on landed security; the company to be administered in the King's name, but subject to the controul of commissioners, to be named by the States General. His proposal was at this time rejected, but Law was allowed to set up a private bank, in partnership with his brother, the notes of which should be received in payment of the taxes. In conducting the affairs of this bank, Law shewed that he understood the true principles of credit: his notes were payable at sight: Law declared that a banker deserved death, if he made issues, without having in his possession funds sufficient to answer all demands; and to make his notes still more acceptable, he made them payable in the coin current at the time they were issued, and consequently, freed them from the depreciations to which the coin was subject.* Hence, the credit of his bank rose so high, that his paper was received at one per cent more than specie; trade was facilitated; confidence began to revive; the balance of exchange rose to four or five per cent. in favour of France, and the taxes were paid with greater ease than formerly. Had this plan continued, France would have had all the advantages of a bank similar to the bank of England, dependent on the credit of private merchants; but the impatience of the Regent, and the ambi-

Law sets up a Bank, 1716.

* See the edict for establishing this bank, in the Mem. de la Regence, t. i.

tion of Law, destroyed the institution they had made, in an attempt to improve it.

It is converted into a Government Bank. 1718—19.

The bank had subsisted from May 1716 to the end of 1718, when the Regent, tempted probably by the gain of fifteen per cent. per annum, which had latterly accrued to the proprietors, declared by an act of council, that the King had taken Mr. Law's bank into his own hands, under the name of the Royal Bank; that he had reimbursed the proprietors for their shares, and had become answerable for their notes, amounting to fifty-nine millions of livres. The change of system was soon perceptible. Although the Regent had declared by an edict that the notes should never become subject to the variations of the coinage, yet the notes themselves promised only so many "livres in silver coin," instead of livres "of the weight and standard of this day," the form before used. The issues were increased beyond all proportion to the value of specie, or to the real wants of the country. In the year 1719, the first of the new bank, notes to the amount of one thousand millions of livres were fabricated.

Missisippi Scheme, 1717.

In the mean time Law had commenced the execution of another great scheme; namely, the formationof a company, which, engrossing all the trade of the kingdom, and all the revenues of the crown, was to carry on the business of merchants to every part of the globe, be the sole farmers of the taxes, and sole coiners of money. This company, created by letters patent in August, 1717, by which Law was made director, in the beginning aspired to no more than the possession and trade of the whole province of Louisiana, a country watered by the great river Missisippi, from which the

project took its name of the Missisippi scheme. The property of this company was divided into 200,000 shares or actions of 500 livres each, and the subscription was ordered to be paid in *billets d'état,* which were received at their nominal value of 500 livres, though worth no more than 160 livres in the market. This of course was one great inducement to the holders of such notes to subscribe to the company; a much greater was, that the interest of these notes was fixed at four per cent. per annum, to be paid by the King. This circuitous mode of raising the value of the *billets d'état* seems to betray great ignorance; it is evident that the debt of the state might have been discharged, at much less cost. By the scheme adopted, the new company became entitled to receive in the whole twenty millions of livres annually from the King, the first year's payment of which was assigned to the expenses of the commercial enterprize. Other modes of raising the value of the shares were adopted without equal good faith. It was given out that new mines had been discovered in Louisiana; ingots were carried to the mint said to have been found there, and the produce was declared to be richer than that of the mines of Potosi. A troop of six thousand of the most indigent of the inhabitants of Paris were fitted up as miners, and provided with tools to embark for the new Peru. By these dishonourable acts the value of the shares was raised, and the public credulity rose so high, that the unimproved parts of Louisiana were sold at the rate of thirty thousand livres the square league, to the amount of six hundred thousand livres. The *billets d'état* rose to their nominal value.

In the beginning of the year 1718, the Chancellor D'Agues-

Disgrace of D'Aguesseau. 1718.

seau was deprived of his office, and ordered to retire to his country house at Fresne. This disgrace has been generally attributed to his opposition to the scheme of Law; by some it has been more plausibly attributed to his timid resistance to the remonstrances of the Parliament, who had taken a violent part against the new projects; others again have said, that D'Aguesseau and Noailles had been detected in consultations respecting the propriety of transferring the Regency; in case the Duke of Orleans should lose his sight by a disease in the eyes, which had for some time afflicted him.* Be the truth as it may, D'Aguesseau and Noailles were disgraced together, and the places of both were given to D'Argenson. One of the first measures of this minister was a fresh depreciation of the coin, in order to extinguish the state paper. For this purpose it was ordained, that persons bringing to the mint four thousand livres in coin, and one thousand livres in paper, should receive back five thousand livres in the new coin; these five thousand livres being of somewhat less intrinsic value than the four thousand of the old currency.† This was considered by D'Argenson an ingenious method of paying off stock without any expense to the King; but it is manifest that it was in fact a flagitious and most impolitic fraud. For besides the direct ruin of the creditors of the state, which of course injured the public credit for the future, the inevitable consequences of this measure were the disturbance of all internal commerce, the bankruptcy of many well-established houses, and the profit of the foreign merchant at the expense of the subjects of France. These considerations were fully represented to the Regent by the Parliament. In the course

* Vie de P. d'Orleans. † Vie de P. d'Orleans, t. i.

of their remonstrance, they shewed that an individual who carried to the bank one hundred and twenty-five marcs of silver and two thousand livres in government paper, received back only one hundred and sixteen marcs of silver under the same denomination. As the Regent refused to grant their prayer, the Parliament ordered, of their own authority, that no money should be received in payment but that of the old standard: the Regent annulled their decrees. The controversy continued for some time longer, till at length the Parliament aimed a blow at Law, whom they considered, in his quality of foreigner, as the real author of all their misfortunes. By their decree of the 12th of August, 1718, they forbade the bank of Law to have any concern in the public revenue, direct or indirect, and prohibited all foreigners from interfering either in their own names, or under the names of others, in the management or administration of the public revenue.*

Resistance of the Parliament.

Aug. 12, 1718.

The Parliament, when they passed this mutinous decree, were determined to go still farther; they were fully prepared to enter upon the trial of Law; some among them, confident of their strength, went so far as to affirm that the affair might be finished in two hours, and proposed that Law should be seized and hung within the gates of the Palace of Justice, before the public could know what was going on. Law, with no unnatural apprehension, fled to the Palais Royal, and prayed for immediate steps against the Parliament. The Regent, uncertain what to do, contented himself at first with receiving the Parliament coldly, and giving them no answer on the subject of their proposition on the government paper. Of the courtiers and ministers who

* Vie de P. d'Orleans, t. i. 257, 295.

surrounded him, some saw with pleasure the downfall of Law, others feared to speak their opinions.

D'Argenson.

At this crisis two men, on whose talents the Regent placed a great reliance, took part against the Parliament. The one was the Abbé Dubois, conscious of the hatred of every man in the country who pretended to a character, and anxious to render despotic, a master whom he knew how to govern. The other was D'Argenson, who had been lately raised to the post of Keeper of the Seals. D'Argenson had been minister of police during the late reign; he was a man of great firmness, readiness, and sagacity, the reputation of which, added to the inestimable advantage of a forbidding countenance, gave him an extraordinary influence over the mob of Paris. With these requisites of a minister of justice, he joined great playfulness of temper, and an obliging disposition. He had made his court to the Duke of Orleans, by concealing from Lewis the Fourteenth some of the correspondence in Spain, in which that Prince's character was implicated. Having now risen to a high post in the state, he called forth all the resources with which native talent and long experience furnished him, to mortify the Parliament, at whose bar he had often received, with a submissive air but irritated mind, a reprimand for his conduct in the government of the police, mingled with threats of an enquiry into the sums he had levied on the public without legal authority. The remembrance of these scenes rankled in his breast, and embittered his counsels to the Regent.

Rank of the Duke of Maine.

While Law, Dubois, and D'Argenson were impelling the Regent on one side, other solicitations came from a different quarter, on a subject of another kind. The Duke of

Bourbon could not bear that the Duke of Maine should have the direction of the King's education in preference to himself. The Regent, weary of his importunity, charged the Duke of St. Simon to induce him to forego, or delay his pretensions. But to all the refined and prolix arguments of St. Simon, the Duke of Bourbon only replied, that he knew the Regent could do it if he chose, and that his future friendship or enmity would depend upon the decision. St. Simon finding it impossible to shake him, bethought himself of a line of argument much more suitable to his own inclinations than to the Regent's instructions. He represented to the Duke of Bourbon, that if he would join the peers in their demand for the reduction of the Duke of Maine to his rank in the peerage, that object once accomplished, the taking away the education would follow of course. The Duke of Bourbon, after some demur, agreed, and the Regent, taken by surprize, was forced to consent. This point being thus settled, edicts were prepared, combining the objects of D'Argenson and Law, with those of the Dukes of Bourbon and St. Simon. The next step was to prevent resistance, by secrecy and dispatch: for this purpose it was agreed that, at six in the morning, the Parliament should be summoned to the Tuileries; that at eight, the Council of Regency should meet; and that a Bed of Justice should be held immediately afterwards.

Council of Regency.

The Duke of Orleans was much alarmed at the prospect of this strong measure, for if the Duke of Maine should resist, more than half the Council of Regency, and all the Parliament, would probably join him. Finding however that his adversary was more alarmed than himself, he took courage, and went through the day with coolness and composure.

1718. The Duke of Maine and the Count of Thoulouse, his brother, who had come to attend the council, retired as soon as they heard the subject of deliberation. When the edict for reducing the legitimated Princes to their rank of Peers was read, Marshal Villeroy alone said with a sigh, "Then all the dispositions of the late King are annulled; I cannot see it but with pain." The Regent suddenly replied, "Sir, the Duke of Maine is my brother-in-law, but I prefer an open enemy to a concealed one." While this was going on, St. Simon had laid open before him the petition of the peers, to which the names of Villeroy and Villars were affixed.

Bed of Justice.

The Parliament was subdued with as much ease as the Council of Regency. When the first President, de Mêsmes, endeavoured in an artful speech, but in a timid manner, to gain time for considering the edicts which reversed the decrees of the Parliament, D'Argenson approached the throne, and pretending to take the orders of the infant monarch, called out in a thundering voice, "The King desires to be obeyed, and immediately." The other edicts, reducing the rank of the legitimated princes, and giving the care of the King's education to the Duke of Bourbon, were then read: all were registered in silence. The Count of Thoulouse had his precedence restored to him by special favour. The triumph of the Regent was complete.*

The day after this famous bed of justice the Parliament met, and protested that they had not taken any part in what had passed on that occasion. The Regent replied by arresting the President Blamont, and two counsellors, and sending them to distant prisons. The Parliament was humbled by this step. They made remonstrances indeed, but in a softened

* St. Simon. Duclos.

tone, and when the Regent was pleased some time after to release his prisoners, they expressed their thanks without qualification. The president Blamont, seeing the Parliament thus subdued, thought it better to change sides, and afterwards acted as spy for the court.*

The relation of these affairs has somewhat led us out of the path which we were following, and to which I now return.

Towards the end of 1718, the company began to advance rapidly towards the objects of Law's ambition. About that time the charter of the Senegal company, and the royal farm of tobacco were placed in their hands. In the following year an edict appeared, granting them the exclusive privilege of trading to the East Indies, China, and the South Seas, together with all the possessions of the East India company established by Colbert, which was now dissolved. The company of Law upon this assumed the title of company of the Indies, and fifty thousand new shares were created to meet their increased business. This number seems to bear a very inadequate proportion to the two hundred thousand created for the trade to Louisiana alone. In July and August of the same year, the Regent made over to the company the exclusive privilege of the mint, and the contract of the great farms. Thus they had in their hands almost all the commerce and revenue of France; Law promised a dividend of 200 livres yearly on each share of 500 livres, worth originally 160, that is to say, forty per cent. on the nominal value, and more than cent. per cent. on the real value of the original subscription. The consequence was, such a demand for the fifty thousand

India Company. 1719.

* Vie de Phil. d'Orleans. Duclos.

new shares, that for several weeks all the people of highest rank in France appeared waiting on foot at Mr. Law's door, while he delayed declaring the names of the new stockholders.

Sept. 1719. In September 1719, however, 300,000 new shares were created, at 5000 livres each, in order to lend the Regent a sum of 1500 millions of livres, at three per cent., to pay off the debt of the state. The one hundred millions formerly lent, were reduced to the same interest. Law had now issued six hundred thousand shares; and it is calculated that, with the interest of money lent to the King, his profits on the great farms, on the mint, on the farm of tobacco, on the general receipt of taxes, and the profits of trade, he had more than 80 millions of livres of revenue, forming a yearly dividend of 133 livres for each share.* Other writers, however, calculate the revenue of the company at 131 millions.

Progress of the System. The lofty expectations held out by Law, the solid advantages the company had obtained, and the unbounded prospect which its commercial privileges opened to the imagination, raised the value of the stock of the company beyond all reasonable measure. To increase the price, the Regent had got the whole of the number last created, together with one hundred thousand of the former shares, into his own hands; every means was employed to narrow the supply, while the demand increased so much, that in November 1719, ten thousand livres were given for a single share.

Frenzy of the Nation. In the mean time an universal frenzy had seized the nation. Peers, judges, cardinals, bishops, ladies, ministers, shopkeepers, footmen, all turned gamblers, and speculated from

* History of Cramond.

morning till night on the rise and fall of stock. A clerk of the bank, seeing the avidity of the speculators to buy paper, called out to the crowd pressing at the door, "Never fear, Gentlemen, all your money shall be taken." A physician going to visit a lady, exclaimed all the time he felt her pulse, "It falls, it falls; oh good God! it falls!" The lady alarmed, started and ran to the bell; but the doctor, surprised in his turn, relieved her anxiety, by telling her he was only speaking of the stocks. Two men of letters, M. de la Mothe, and the Abbé Terrason, talking together of the madness that had infected the nation, congratulated themselves that they were superior to the common delusion; but it so happened, that not long afterwards the two scholars met in the Rue Quincampoix, where they had both come to bargain for actions. As the shame was mutual, they rallied each other and pursued their course.

The Rue Quincampoix, where this traffic was carried on, became so continually thronged, that the houses situated in it were let at an extravagant rate. Houses for which eight hundred livres rent were usually paid, now yielded from six to sixteen thousand; and even a cobler who had a stall of planks placed against a garden, earned two hundred livres a day by letting chairs, and furnishing pens and paper. Nay, a hump-backed man was said to have made one hundred and fifty thousand livres in a few days by letting out his back as a writing desk to the brokers. All the avenues leading into the street were filled by break of day, and at night it was necessary to use force to drive away the crowd. This concourse in a narrow street becoming exceedingly inconvenient, an edict was issued, prohibiting all persons from buying and selling stock in the

Rue Quincampoix. The traffic was sometime afterwards transferred to the Place Vendome, the whole area of which was covered by tents, some filled with the stockholders, others destined for refreshments, and others again filled with gaming tables and lotteries, where inferior rogues imitated, on a small scale, the operations of the great state swindlers. All the evening the Place was filled with ladies and gentlemen of the highest rank, walking up and down; and this spot thus became at once the general market both of business and pleasure. At length the Chancellor, who had his court in one of the houses of the Place, complained that the noise was so great he could not hear the suitors. Mr. Law then bought the *Hotel de Soissons,* belonging to the Prince de Carignan, which was likewise situated in the Place Vendome. In the magnificent gardens of this palace six hundred pavilions were disposed among the trees and fountains, and an ordinance was issued by the government prohibiting, under severe penalties, all buying and selling of stock except in one of these pavilions. Never were stock-jobbers so pleasantly accommodated!

The immense rise in the price of actions was naturally attended with sudden revolutions of fortune; persons in the lowest stations of life were lifted by the expansion of the bubble to the highest, and their behaviour in their new position gave occasion to many ridiculous occurrences. Mr. Law's coachman having made his fortune, asked his master's leave to quit his service; to which Mr. Law consented, with the condition, that he would provide another as good as himself. The man brought two of his former comrades; and desiring Mr. Law to choose, said, that he himself would take the other to drive his own carriage. A Mdlle. Begond being one night

Anecdotes.

at the opera, observed a lady enter magnificently dressed: she looked at her a short time, and then whispered her mother, "I am much mistaken if this fine lady is not Mary, our cook." The whisper spread through the theatre, till at length it reached the ears of the object of it, who turning round to Mdlle. Begond, said, "It is true; I am Mary, your cook; I won a large sum of money in the Rue Quincampoix; I like fine clothes and fine jewels, and you see me drest in them; I have paid for every thing I have on; can every one else say as much?" The most absurd blunders were made by these new favourites of fortune. One of them, who had ordered a coach, being asked what arms he wished to have on the carriage, answered, "Oh, the finest, by all means." A footman had become rich enough to buy a handsome carriage, but when it came to the door he got up behind instead of in the inside. A lady whose husband, a baker's son, had bought a vast quantity of fine plate, arranged it for supper in so strange a fashion, that the soup was served up in a basin for receiving church offering, and chalices were made to serve the office of salt-sellers. The rise of the stock was so rapid, that great fortunes were made, as it were, by accident. A person who was taken ill sent his servant to sell two hundred and fifty shares at 8000 livres each, but in the mean time the shares had risen to 10,000, and the servant gained 500,000 livres, which he put in his pocket. Many similar instances occurred of agents making a fortune at the expense of their employers.*

While these things were happening among the creatures of the new system, it will excite no surprise to find the

* Hist. du Systeme.

inventor of the machine, the discoverer of the new mine, the god of all this wealth, courted with a deference, which amounted almost to worship. His antichamber was crowded from morning till night with ladies of the highest quality, all begging for a portion of the India stock. When the Regent wished to send a Duchess to Modena, to attend upon his daughter, some one in his presence said, "If you want a Duchess, you had better send to Mdme. Law's, for they are all there." Law himself was so surrounded by these ladies, that when once admitted into his room, he found it almost impossible to get rid of them.* One lady who had in vain attempted to obtain an audience, drove to a house where he was at dinner, and called out, "Fire! Fire!" All the company ran from the house; but Law seeing the lady jump out of her carriage to meet him, made off in the opposite direction. Another lady told her coachman to overturn whenever he should see Law in the streets, and happening to see him first herself, she screamed out of the window, "overturn now! overturn now!" This lady was more successful: Law ran to her assistance, and she confessed her stratagem.

The family of Law shared in the honours paid to him. His son was appointed to dance with the young King, and his daughter was asked in marriage by the greatest families in France, and even in other countries of Europe.

Conduct of Law.

In the midst of all this grandeur, Law seems to have retained an affection for his native country, and to have imbibed a thorough contempt for the people by whom he was so extravagantly courted. His countrymen, who had letters of introduction to him, were received with the greatest courtesy,

* See a curious instance of this in Madame's Letters. Fragmens, ii, 274.

and went away charmed with his affability, ease, and good-breeding.* At the same period Archibald, Earl of Ilay, afterwards Duke of Argyll, going one day to see him by appointment, observed the antichamber crowded with people of quality; but on reaching the minister's cabinet, he found him engaged in writing a letter to his gardener at Lauriston, with directions for planting cabbages; and when he had done, he invited the Earl to play a game of picquet with him. The Dukes and Peers of France were at last unable to obtain admission without feeing his porter at the gate, his footmen in the antichamber, and the valets for admission to his own apartment.

Effects of the System.

Hitherto the effects of the system had been striking, and even brilliant beyond expectation. The quantities of money and jewels which flowed into France from foreign countries were prodigious. The large fortunes acquired by speculators, and the rapid increase of the currency, created the greatest demand for goods of all sorts, and the nominal prices of all commodities increased wonderfully. Cloth rose from fifteen to fifty livres the ell; coffee from fifty sous to eighteen livres the pound; artificers' wages from fifteen sous to three livres a day. The most extravagant prices were given by the stock-jobbers; one of them gave two hundred livres for a single wood-hen for his dinner; and green peas were more than once sold for one hundred pistoles the pint. In November, 1719, it was calculated there were three hundred and five thousand strangers in Paris. The streets were blocked up by the crowd of new equipages, and the warehouses stripped of all the fine cloth, of velvets, and cloth of

* Hist. of Cramond, p. 190.

gold, to supply the fortunate gamblers. It was generally remarked that the winter of this year exhibited more splendor of dress than the finest summer ever seen.

Nor were the advantages derived from the system, all of this doubtful or superficial nature. The gains made by the government, and the beneficial transfer of the debt, enabled the Regent to remit fifty-two millions of arrears on taxes, which had been imposed a few years before; the rate of interest which had been so extravagantly high, sunk very low, and the whole country was filled with houses repairing, farms re-occupied, and fields better cultivated; marks of an improving and flourishing condition which had been long unknown.

It was thought just that the author of this splendid change should be honoured with a new mark of the confidence of the Regent. With this view, it was proposed that he should be placed at the head of the finances, with the title of Comptroller General; but his religion was an obstacle. This objection, however, he speedily removed by embracing the Roman Catholic religion, together with all his family, in December, 1719. On the 5th of January, 1720, he was declared Comptroller General; an elevation which produced a new influx of flattery, both in prose and verse.

Law Comptroller General, Jan. 1720.

The brilliant and sudden success which had attended the execution of Law's scheme, seems to have inspired him with extravagant projects of ambition, and the English ambassador with what must be considered, very natural apprehensions. In September, 1719, Lord Stair thus writes to his court: "I come now to take notice of one thing to you, which, in my opinion, is very much to be minded, and that is the spirit,

behaviour, and discourse of the man, whom from henceforth you must look upon as the first minister, and that is Mr. Law. He, in all his discourse, pretends he will set France much higher than ever she was before, and put her in a condition to give the law to all Europe; that he can ruin the trade and credit of England and Holland whenever he pleases; that he can break our bank whenever he has a mind, and our East India company. He said publicly the other day, at his own table, when Lord Londonderry was present, that there was but one great kingdom in Europe, and one great town, and that was France, and Paris. He told Pitt that he would bring down our East India stock, and entered into articles with him to sell him, at twelve months hence, £100,000 of stock, at 11 per cent. under the present current price. You may imagine what we have to apprehend from a man of this temper, who makes no scruple to declare such views, and who will have all the power and all the credit at this court."

Apprehensions of Lord Stair.

Stair wrote again on the 30th of April, 1720: "I am afraid our people of England think too neglectfully of Mr. Law's schemes. I own to you, that as this kingdom is disposed, there is great odds that it will miscarry; but it is not impossible, far from it, that it may hold long enough to do us a great deal of mischief. Another thing I dare be bold to say, it cannot succeed without undoing us; and if Mr. Law can compass our ruin, I think he is in a fair way to carry through his project in France. I know Mr. Law thinks so too; and that being the case, we may be very sure he will do us all the mischief in his power. You cannot think that power is small, considering the absolute authority he has acquired over the Regent."

Law was so confident of success at this time, that he said he would raise the nation so high, that every state in the world would send ambassadors to Paris, while the King of France would only send couriers in return.

Thus impressed with a notion of the danger that might arise to England from Law's success, Lord Stair never ceased to excite the Regent against him, by every insinuation he could imagine. The English ministry, however, finding Law firmly established in the mind of the Regent, disavowed their ambassador, and persuaded the French court that every vestige of ill-will yet subsisting between the two courts, was to be attributed to the unfavourable representations of Stair.* A pardon for the killing of Wilson (an equivocal kind of compliment), was sent over to Law. Earl Stanhope, when he came to Paris, said, that all Lord Stair had done was without any authority from his court, and even contrary to orders, and that he should be recalled. His recall actually took place soon afterwards; and one of the men to whose activity and vigilance the House of Brunswick owes its throne, was left for more than twenty years in retirement in Scotland, where he was obliged to put his estate in the hands of trustees, to pay off debts contracted during the period of his embassy. It is true, indeed, that when at Paris, he had made absurd and even insolent pretensions to honours which were not justly his due.

At the time, however, when Law had triumphed over all his enemies, and was realising a splendid fortune, the balloon which had carried him so high, began to descend as rapidly as it had risen. When the actions of the company were sold

* See Lettres de Madame.

at the enormous sum of ten thousand livres, numbers of speculators, well acquainted with money transactions, imagining that the price could not last, converted all their stock into cash, and carried it off to foreign countries. Bourdon and La Richardiere, two famous stock-jobbers, remitted hundreds of thousands of *louis d'ors*, together with a quantity of diamonds, to England. A M. Le Cevennois likewise carried his profits to England, and afterwards became famous in the transactions of the South Sea stock. One Vermalet having gained more than a million of livres, conveyed them to Holland in a cart of hay and straw driven by himself. These transactions, and a latent mistrust of the wonder-working paper, caused a scarcity of specie in the kingdom. Law was called upon to provide for the difficulty. It seems to have been the mistake of this adventurer, to suppose that he could abolish the use of gold and silver, and carry on all the internal transactions of the country, in the paper of a mercantile company, not exchangeable into any thing of intrinsic value. This theory he endeavoured to carry into effect, when, owing to the causes I have mentioned, he found the quantity of specie diminishing: by several edicts issued in January, February, and March, 1720, he restricted the payments of the bank in specie to one hundred livres in gold, and ten in silver; the standard of the coin was frequently varied, while the bank notes were ordered to be received at five, and sometimes at ten per cent. above the specie. A measure of much more severe and arbitrary character was likewise adopted. In February, 1720, an edict appeared prohibiting any persons from having in their possession more than five hundred livres in specie, under pain of a heavy fine, and confiscation of the sums found,

Decline of the System.

January to March, 1720.

with a reward of a fixed share to the informer. This edict produced suspicion and distrust among families, heaps of spies in the public, and alarm everywhere. M. Lambert, a President of the Parliament, came to the Regent and said, he knew a person who had more than the quantity of specie allowed. "M. Le President," cried the Regent, "how can you practice so infamous a trade?" "It is myself," answered the President: "I prefer one hundred thousand francs in coin, to all your notes." Many adopted his opinion without imitating his frankness. Only about one fifth of the specie supposed to be existing in France, was brought to the bank.

Union of the Bank and Company. Feb. 1720.

In February, 1720, a step of great importance was taken. The royal bank was incorporated with the company of the Indies; the state remained the guarantee of the notes of the bank, and none were to be issued without an order in council. The Regent at the same time gave up to the company all the profits of the bank since he had taken it into his hands, a step which, for a short period, raised the value of the actions of the company. At the period when this transfer was made, the amount of paper issued by the bank in circulation was 1,000,000,000. From the incorporation in February, to the 1st of May following, there were fabricated notes for the value of 1,696,400,000 livres, and in that month more than 2,200,000,000 of livres of the paper money of the bank were in circulation. With the facilities thus obtained the conversion of the national debt was entirely accomplished, and all the ancient securities, forming the old debt of the state, were cancelled. It has been supposed that it was the intention of the Regent to have sold the shares of the company

remaining in his hands to pay off the new debt. He still possessed 100,000 shares, which the company had agreed to take at 9000 livres each; he would thus have obtained 900 millions, a sum that would have paid off a large proportion of the public debt.

Before this could be done, however, the whole scheme was swept away. It was unfortunately discovered, that notes issued without stint, and supported by no substance, must lose in public estimation. An attempt indeed was made to give a forced value to the currency, by ordering that no payments whatever should be made in specie. M. Canillac, a profligate friend of the Regent, said to Law, "Your system is stolen from mine; I draw bills, and do not pay them, and so do you." In April, the distress of the finances was made manifest by an order for the reduction of the rentes to two and a half per cent. instead of five. In May, another edict appeared which put an end to the system. The paper of the company had accumulated, as we have seen, to an extraordinary degree. It was computed that there were in circulation about 2600 millions of livres of paper, and only 1300 millions of bullion. It was argued in the council that it was necessary, either to reduce the paper to an equality with the coin, or to raise the denomination of the coin to make it equal in value with the paper. Law opposed both these projects as needless and absurd, but of the two, he gave his preference to the latter. By the advice of D'Argenson and some other enemies of the system, the former was preferred, and an edict was issued, by which it was ordered that the actions of the company, and notes of the bank, should gra-

Arbitrary Measures.

Edict of May, 1720.

dually diminish in value, till at the end of a year they should pass current for only one half of their nominal worth.*

It is impossible to conceive any thing more unwise, more fraudulent, or more villainous than this edict. If, as it appeared, the quantity of paper issued had caused a depreciation of the whole currency, the only just way of remedying the disorder was for the state gradually to withdraw the excess of the paper of the bank; or if fraud was so inherent in the French system of finance, that it was impossible to proceed without it, the alteration of the standard of the coin opened an easy way for avoiding the difficulty. But the method adopted, while it was unjust and tyrannical in the extreme, was at the same time the extreme of imprudence; it tore away the flesh from the figure which the Regent had taken so much pains to animate, and left the bare skeleton of a cheat, to be exposed to the eyes of the nation.

It is not matter of surprize, that the edict just mentioned should have occasioned indignation and affright among all classes. The parliament, so often ready to become the organ of the popular voice, refused to register the edict, and made the strongest remonstrances on the subject: D'Argenson, who had shared with Law in the administration of the finances, was the victim of this storm; he was obliged to retire, and the obnoxious decree was withdrawn.

The attempt to revive a credit which had expired, however, could hardly succeed; the notes of the bank were now universally discredited, and the only effect of restoring their nominal value, was to enable some dishonest debtors to cheat

* Stewart, ii, 263. Hist. du Systeme.

their creditors. Among other victims, it is curious to find the name of Mr. Law. Having bought an estate of the President Novion, for four hundred thousand livres in gold, with a reserved right of redemption within a stated period, the son of the seller now availed himself of this clause, and put into the hands of Mr. Law four hundred thousand livres in his own depreciated paper.

Bank stops payment, May, 1720.

On the 27th of May, the same day on which the former value was nominally restored to the paper, all value whatever was virtually taken from it by closing the bank, in order to stop the payment in specie of the bank notes.

When the very large amount of bank notes in circulation at the time the bank stopped payment, is considered, it may easily be conceived that the distress occasioned by this measure was extreme. In order to relieve in some degree the embarrassment of trade, an edict was issued, permitting all persons to have in their possession whatever sums in specie they thought proper, and a quantity of silver was sent to the commissaries to pay in change for small notes to those who had the most pressing occasion for supply. On the 10th of June the bank was opened for the payment of notes of ten livres each, and a day was appointed for exchanging notes of 100 livres into small notes. The bank being the only place where specie could be procured, the crowds which assembled there were immense, and scarcely a day passed without some persons being suffocated or crushed to death. On the 9th of July, the entrance to the bank on the side of the Mazarin gardens was so thronged, that the guards, after admitting a small number, thought proper to shut the door. Those who were left on the outside, soon became clamorous,

June.

and began to throw stones into the gardens, which being resented by the soldiers, one of them fired his musket through the keyhole, killed one person, and wounded another. At length the gate was opened, but the guards were ranged in the inside with fixed bayonets, and of such as ventured within their reach several were wounded, and one run through the body. The 17th of the same month was productive of still more fatal accidents. That day being appointed for the payment of notes of one hundred livres, so vast a crowd assembled, that no less than twenty persons were suffocated. This misfortune excited such indignation among the people, that they repaired in vast numbers to the Palais Royal, carrying with them three of the bodies of the persons who had been killed. The Regent immediately ordered the gates to be opened, and left the crowd to range unmolested in the vast courts of the Palace. Their fury soon began to spend itself; but Mr. Law's coachman, who was waiting at the door for his master to go home, being ordered to drive off, imprudently said, in the hearing of the mob, that they were a parcel of blackguards, and deserved to be hanged. This enraged the people so much, that they broke the carriage in pieces, the coachman hardly escaping with life. They then began to call out for Mr. Law; but Mons. Le Blanc, Secretary of State, coming out of the gate, harangued the multitude in a firm tone, and his advice, being seconded by a body of troops, was willingly taken by the crowd: they quietly dispersed, and the Regent ordered the three dead bodies to be decently buried. How different was this mob from those which seventy years afterwards appeared in the same place!

Fatal Accidents.

July 17th.

On the same day that this event took place, the Parliament

had refused to register an edict, by which the exclusive privilege of all maritime commerce was vested in the company. This measure was so intolerable to the mercantile part of the community, that the Parliament counted on an effective support in their opposition to it, and they were not a little encouraged in this hope by the tumult which happened during their sitting.* D'Aguesseau had now been recalled from exile, and made Keeper of the Seals. The Regent, in order to signify to him clearly the purpose for which he had been brought back, sent Law to fetch him in his carriage from Fresne. When this great man found how mighty a storm he had been brought to allay, his love of power and his attachment to the Parliament made him at once tremble and hesitate. He reported to the Council the opposition of the Parliament; and concluded by saying, in a stammering manner, that in the present sad conjuncture, he had only to rely on the prudence and goodness of the Regent. The Duke of Orleans then gave his opinion; and remarking that the Parliament seemed to fan the flame of sedition, proposed they should be exiled to Blois. The Council unanimously consented, but by the desire of the Chancellor the place of exile was changed to Pontoise. The sentence of banishment was converted by the Parliament into a party of pleasure. Ladies of the first rank went from Paris to attend great dinners, at which the President of the Parliament presided; after dinner the magis-

Banishment of the Parliament.

* The First President of the Parliament shewed the joy he felt at the success of the mob, in a manner not quite consistent with the gravity of his character. Happening to go to the door while the debate lasted, he there heard of the destruction of Law's carriage, upon which, returning to the company, he cried out,

Messieurs, Messieurs, bonne nouvelle,
Le carosse de Law est reduit en canelle.

trates took an airing, and the evening was finished by cards, dice, and supper, at which all the judges assisted. The road of Pontoise came to be not less frequented than that of Versailles had been.*

In the mean time the system was exhibiting fresh symptoms of decay. In order to withdraw some of the paper of the bank, there were created 25 millions of livres of perpetual annuities at two and a half per cent., and afterwards 8 millions at two per cent., and four millions of life annuities, at four per cent. The unfavourable nature of these terms made many hesitate in parting with their bank notes; upon which, on the 15th of August, an edict was issued, declaring that the notes of ten thousand and one thousand livres should have no currency, except for the purchase of annuities and bank accounts, or for the payment of instalments still due on the actions of the company. At length, in October, appeared the edict which struck a death-blow to the whole system. By this edict, the notes were deprived of all value after the 1st of November.†

Fall of the System.

Oct. 24. With regard to the company, it was ordered that a list of all the original proprietors should be made out: that those who still possessed the actions for which they had subscribed, should place them in deposit with the company; and that those who had not retained their number of shares should complete them by purchasing of the

* Duclos.

† Many who neglected to exchange their notes in the interval, or hoped for a favourable turn, kept their notes, which remained in their families for a long time after. When the assignats were issued in 1790, a person was observed in the garden of the Thuilleries with a crowd about him: he turned out to be a man opening a parcel which contained 100,000 livres of Law's bank notes.

company at the rate of 13,500 livres a share. This new act of iniquity naturally caused great alarm among the original holders of shares, many of whom took immediate steps for leaving the kingdom. Upon this, an order appeared to prohibit any one from quitting France, without permission from the Regent, under pain of death. Dwelling-houses were searched for sums acquired by the late stock-jobbing. Jewels to the amount of two millions being found in the house of M. Du Pin, one of the Secretaries to the King, he was sent to the Bastile, in vain protesting that he ought not to be treated as a criminal for doing what the state had sanctioned. Many persons were arrested on the frontiers with money concealed about their persons.

The whole plan of Law being now given up, the great farms, the management of the revenue and the mint were taken from the India company, who were thus reduced to a mere trading body.

Reduction of the Public Debt. Jan. 1721.

When the total amount of the public debt came to be ascertained, it was found to amount, on the 1st day of January, 1721, including the shares of the India company, to the vast sum of 3,189,401,705 capital, and more than 99 millions of interest. In order to reduce a debt which it was thought impossible to face, Commissioners were appointed by the usual name of Visa, to examine the state of all the paper outstanding. They were directed to range all the creditors of the state in five classes, the four first comprehending all who had bought their securities with real effects, the last consisting of those who could give no satisfactory account of themselves. Deductions were to be made from the demands of the four first classes; the securities of persons of the fifth class

were to be totally annihilated. The consequence of this last clause was, that actions of the company, which cost 13,500 livres, were sold for a single *louis d'or*. The Commissioners immediately began their labours, and in consequence of their report, the future interest to be paid by the state was reduced to about 56 millions of livres; an operation by which the creditors of the state were in fact robbed of upwards of 40 millions of livres a year.

Adventures of Law.

The reader may perhaps be curious to know something of the personal fate of Law. When he found himself becoming unpopular, he took refuge in the Palais Royal, where he had apartments assigned him by the Regent. As the paper fell, his name became extremely odious to the people of Paris, of which a ridiculous instance is given. A hackney coachman who was fallen upon by a gentleman and his servants, called out, "Here is Law going to murder me!" upon which the mob so effectually took his part, that the gentleman was glad to escape with his life.

In December, Law finding the current of indignation setting in still more strongly against him, resigned all his offices, and requested permission to retire to one of his country seats. It is said that at his last interview with the Duke of Orleans, he addrest him in these words, "I acknowledge that I have committed great faults; I did so, because I am a man, and all men liable to err; but I declare to your Royal Highness that none of them proceeded from wickedness or dishonesty, and that nothing of the kind will be found in the whole course of my conduct."

Two or three days after Law had left Paris he received a note from the Duke of Bourbon, expressed in the kindest

manner, informing him that the Regent permitted him to leave the kingdom, and had ordered him passports, offering him at the same time any money he might require. Law accepted the passports but declined the money. A day or two afterwards he set out for Brussels in a post-chaise belonging to Madame de Prie, the mistress of the Duke of Bourbon, escorted by six horse-guards of the Duke.

When the departure of Law was known, various sentiments agitated the nation. Some rejoiced that the kingdom was rid of so dangerous an empiric; others wished he had been retained to make atonement for the suffering he had caused; others again regretted his departure, thinking that the man who had wove the web, was the only one able to unravel it. At the Council of State, an altercation took place between the Regent and the Duke of Bourbon: each accused the other of being the most concerned for the safety of Law, while the council were perhaps not displeased that Princes, who so seldom hear the truth, should in their turn have to listen to censures and reproaches. Dec. 16. 1720.

The conduct of Law in the season of his prosperity had been magnificently expensive, and prodigally generous. When, upon his conversion, he was made honorary churchwarden of the parish of St. Roch, he gave 500,000 livres towards completing the church. He distributed another sum of 500,000 livres among the English at St. Germains, whose pensions had been suppressed. There having been found great difficulty on a particular occasion in obtaining fish for Lent, he ordered several ship loads of the finest, and the ships not arriving till Easter Eve, he distributed the whole gratuitously among the Mendicant Friars. His presents to hospi-

tals and churches of all kinds, as well as to distressed individuals, were on the grandest scale. Finding that a lady had lost 100,000 livres in one of the crowds assembled to see him pass, he immediately replaced the whole sum from his own shares.

In the disposal of the large sums which he reserved for himself, Law had vested the whole amount in landed estates in France, a strong proof of his thorough belief in the success of his plan. The entire sum so laid out, with the purchase-money of a library and of the place of Secrétaire du Roi, did not quite amount to 10 millions of livres. Soon after his departure from France, the whole of his property was seized and confiscated, including an annuity of 200,000 livres on the lives of Lady Catharine Law and her children, for which 5 millions of livres had been paid, and in contradiction to a special edict, by which it had been declared that this sum should never be liable to confiscation for any cause whatever.

Mr. Law staid but a short time at Brussels; he was at Venice in January, 1721, during the Carnival, and is said to have had an interview there with the celebrated Cardinal Alberoni, then, like himself, a minister in disgrace. It was even affirmed that the Pretender had made a journey to Venice on purpose to see him. But while received every where with the greatest attentions, and accompanied in all places by rumours of immense wealth, he was obliged to get himself inscribed a Roman citizen, in order to avoid his creditors, it being a privilege of that title to be exempted from arrest, except by one of their own body. But his creditors having assigned their debts to a Roman citizen likewise, he went to Copenhagen, where he received an invitation from the English

Ministry to return to his native country. He accordingly embarked on board the flag ship of Sir John Norris, commanding the Baltic squadron. Upon his arrival in England, Lord Coningsby complained in the House of Lords, that one who had renounced his country and his religion, should be brought over by the Admiral; but after some discussion the subject was allowed to drop. After this, Law continued to reside some years in England. At one time he had hopes of being reinstated in his post in France, but his expectations were totally blasted by the death of the Regent, his original patron; and he was finally reduced to the lingering misery of memorials. In one of these papers he thus skilfully vindicates his own integrity at the expense of the rest of the world. "I had it in my power to have settled my daughter in marriage in the first houses of Italy, Germany, and England, but I refused all offers of that nature, thinking it inconsistent with my duty to, and affection for the state in whose service I had the honour to be engaged. I do not assume to myself any merit from this conduct, and I never so much as spoke upon the subject to the Regent. But I cannot help observing, that this mode of conduct is diametrically opposite to the idea my enemies wish to impress of me; and surely all Europe ought to have a good opinion of my disinterestedness, and of the condition to which I am reduced, since I no longer receive any proposals of marriage for my children."*

About the year 1725, Mr. Law finally left England and settled at Venice, where he died in 1729, in a state but little removed from want. His brother, William Law, after being fifteen months confined in prison for affairs connected with the company, lived till 1752, when he likewise died poor. John

* Hist. of Cramond.

Law left only one son, who died unmarried, but the descendants of William Law distinguished themselves in the French service, and one of them is still to be found in high station both in the army and the court. Political writers have been very much divided on the question of the merits of Law: while the greater number have laughed at him as an empiric, or inveighed against him as a swindler, some have praised his intentions, and argued that his plan would have succeeded had he been allowed to retain the sole direction of it. A calm review, at this distance of time, may perhaps convince us that the faults of Law were indeed enormous, but that they arose neither from incapacity nor dishonesty, but were the fruits of a heated imagination, an over-sanguine temper, and a miscalculation of the nature and effects of credit.

Review of the System.

With regard to the original conception of the plan, a great part of it at least, seems to have been rational and practicable. Law found France weighed down by an overwhelming debt, and the state defrauded by the farmers of the taxes, who acquired enormous fortunes by oppressing the people, and overreaching the government. In these circumstances he proposed to found a great trading company, which should enjoy advantageous privileges in commerce, and farm the whole revenue. The subscriptions to this company were to be destined to pay off the debt of the state, which thenceforth would become debtor to the company, and pay to it one uniform regular interest. At the same time a banking company was to issue notes that would facilitate credit, and increase the circulation of the country. So far all was plausible. But in the original conception of the plan, or in the additions made to it in the intoxication of unexpected success, four

great defects are to be observed, 1st. Law overlooked the appalling fact, that the value of the actions of the company, and the paper of the bank, depended on the will of a despotic government. Hence, all his comparisons of France to England and Holland failed; a profligate Prince or ignorant administration had it in their power at any moment to destroy, the whole value of the paper by a breath; and it was easy to see that credit, once shaken, could never again be made steadfast. 2nd. It was a great mistake to unite the company of the Indies with the bank; the two things are in their nature distinct; a trading company is a speculation which runs the risk of profit or loss; a banking company, which furnishes the currency of a nation, ought to be secure from all hazard; its safety depends on its being always provided with means to meet its outstanding debts. 3rd. It was likewise a great mistake to allow the government to be a party to a company which was to revive credit. The requisites of a merchant are patience, frugality, industry, integrity; the characteristics of the French government were improvidence, extravagance, and dishonesty. 4th. The attempt to supersede the use of coin, was made without due consideration. Some means must be afforded of measuring the value of a paper currency; and the best yet discovered, is the facility of converting it into coin.

To these faults in the conception, were added many others in the execution of the system, The mad infatuation of the public was first excited, and afterwards turned to account, in a manner, of which a reputable merchant would have been ashamed. But when the shame had been incurred, the delusion might have been made profitable. If the Regent had sold a large number of shares when their price was

at the highest, the greater part of the capital of the debt would have reverted into his hands. It has been estimated that 80 millions, payable as interest of the national debt, would have been reduced to 8. But instead of this sagacious measure, the Regent, by the advice of his council, issued the disastrous edict of the 21st of May. The argument used in favour of that measure was, that there were at that time in circulation twice as many millions of paper as there were of coin. The advocates of the system have very reasonably asked, "What then?" In fact, a more ridiculous reason could not be given. But it is probable that these reasoners did not know the strength of their own cause; the truth was, that the superabundant quantity of paper was causing the coin to go out of circulation, and in a short time would have carried it all out of France. But a remedy for this evil would have been found, either in raising the denomination of the coin, according to the usual fraudulent practice, or in withdrawing a certain quantity of the paper, or both. Even after the measure adopted was taken, good faith and regularity would still have preserved the system. Money still bore an interest under 3 per cent.; and a regular payment of the interest due on the debt would have maintained the credit of the bank. But the system had by this time fallen into the guardianship of its enemies, and their object was to strangle it as soon as possible.

Upon the whole, Law must be esteemed a visionary indeed, but richly endowed both with sagacity and genius. If he failed in dragging France out of the pit into which she had fallen, it is to be attributed not so much to the faults of his own scheme, which might have been repaired by skill and discretion, as to the constitution of the French government,

and the opposition made to his administration, by those who ought to have supported him. What Law might have done, if uncontrouled, is still therefore a problem of difficulty: let us now pass to the effects of what was done.

Fortunes of Individuals.

I have mentioned, that many persons increased their fortune in a prodigious manner by the system of Law. Among these, the nobility, and espécially that part of it immediately attached to the court, were most conspicuous. Not above three persons of this rank could be mentioned who had not gambled in actions. The Prince of Deux Ponts, the Dukes of Guiche and Antin, Louvigni, d'Etrées, and the Prince of Rohan, were singularly favoured by fortune. The Duke of La Force greatly augmented his property by dealing in spices, porcelain, &c.; and a long trial took place in the Parliament, to ascertain whether he had not thereby forfeited his title to the peerage. A caricature was made of him in the character of a porter, with immense bales of goods on his shoulders, and the inscription "*Admirez la Force.*" A Mr. Gage, brother of the first Viscount Gage, made such immense profits, that he offered the King of Poland three millions sterling to resign his crown, and upon his refusal entered into a negociation to purchase the sovereignty of Sardinia.* Upon him were written Pope's well known lines:

> The crown of Poland, venal twice an age,
> To just three millions stinted modest Gage.

He was supposed, at one time, to have been possessed of six millions sterling, but the fall of the system reduced him at once to want. He afterwards entered into the service of Spain, and under the name of Count Gage, makes a figure in

* Lodge's Peerage of Ireland, v. 220.

the future history of Europe: he ended by becoming a Spanish grandee.

The Duke of Bourbon.

Of all the speculators, stock-jobbers, and gamblers, however concerned in these transactions, none was more fortunate than the Duke of Bourbon. His dealings were so successful, that he was enabled to re-build Chantilly in a stile of magnificence that long made it the admiration of Europe. The stables especially, which yet remain, are splendid beyond measure. The Duke, it is said imported from England, at one time, no less than 150 of the best blood horses he could procure. He bought a great extent of landed property, particularly in Picardy, where he became possessed of almost the whole country situated between the Oise and the Somme.* One of his friends, however, had the courage to tell him how the world considered riches procured by such means. When the Duke was one day displaying the number of actions of the company of which he was possessed, Turmenies, who was on the most intimate terms with him, alluding to the battles of Rocroy and Nordlinghen, said, "Sir, two actions performed by your grandfather were worth all those." Yet the great Condé, who left an imperishable name, was obliged, every time he went out, to walk between two rows of his creditors, who besieged his door for payment; while the Duke of Bourbon, known only by his vices and bad temper, acquired and enjoyed immense wealth. So blind is fortune in her gifts, and so little are men justified by reason in adoring the rich, and spurning the poor!

Corporations and religious communities took advantage of the system, as well as individuals. The states of Brittany,

* Vie de P. d'Orleans. ii. 38.

the clergy, the jesuits, and the municipalities of the small towns, all reduced their debts by selling small portions of land at immense nominal prices : an estate which had before yielded 4000 livres of rent, sold for 600,000 livres.*

General Result of the System.

Upon the whole, the system of Law, as it was practically carried into effect, was productive of some good, but of great mischief. If some of the higher nobility were enabled to repair their wasted patrimony, and to shine with new splendour at Court; if some impulse was given to trade and commerce by the abundance of capital thrown into the market; if the national debt was diminished, and the taxes lightened in proportion, there were grave inconveniences, on the other side, to be set against these advantages. A general uncertainty was introduced into all transactions concerning property. The tradesman did not know what price to set upon his goods; the merchant was not sure to what countries he might send his cargo; the landed proprietor was uncertain of the value of his own fortune, and that of his children. Men and women of all ranks, of the most sober habits and the most steady reputation, caught the habits and character of gamesters; to gain suddenly, to spend profusely, to neglect honest occupation, to forfeit solemn engagements, to forget the ties of blood and the duties of morality in the dream of a prodigious fortune, to be acquired without talent or labour, were no longer the peculiar features of men addicted to a particular vice, but the qualities of a great part of the nation. Ambition inspired all, from the prince to the footman; avarice and luxury walked hand in hand, misleading the people; and it was long before the greedy hopes and extravagant profusion

* Vie de P. d'Orleans. ii. 46.

created by the scheme of Law, were carried away by the tide of time. Nay, it has been said by those who witnessed the change, that a permanent evil was produced by this scheme: that the love of honour of the soldier, the love of fame of the man of letters, the desire of respect of the judge, and the attention to character of the merchant, were henceforth effaced by an inordinate passion for gain.* We may at all events, lay it down as a certain rule, that the tendency of any similar system is to diminish the force of frugality, patience, and perseverance, to unsettle all the social habits, and to set loose, in all their violence, those passions which excite in men the prosecution of their own gain, to the entire forgetfulness of honour, benevolence, and justice in private, of patriotism, freedom, and integrity in public life.

I have thought it necessary to be thus particular in the account of the scheme of Law, as it affords a curious view of manners and characters, as well as of some very interesting questions in finance. We shall now return to the relation of events, many of which took place during the progress of the system.

Conspiracy of Cellamare.

The Duchess of Maine bore with impatience and indignation the deprivation of rank which her husband, of a less ambitious temper, would speedily have forgotten. Two or three men, of intriguing character, availed themselves of this disposition to frame a very imprudent conspiracy, into which she entered, rather from restlessness of temper, than from deficiency of judgment. This plot, as far as the Duchess was concerned, seems to have consisted in declarations, manifestos, state papers, in short, all that a plot ought not to

* Duclos, t. ii.

consist of, and to have been totally wanting in men, money, and every other means of carrying their plan into execution. It was agreed that the King of Spain should write a letter, desiring that the States General of the kingdom might be assembled; and should this object be obtained, the Regency was to be taken from the Duke of Orleans and given to Philip the Fifth. To ensure the execution of such a plan, means were to be devised for previously carrying off the Regent, and confining him in Spain; but how this abduction was to be effected, seems not to have been clearly arranged. The Count of Laval, the Marquess of Pompadour, the Cardinal de Polignac, one of the negociators of the treaty of Utrecht, and Malesieux, a man of science, appear to have been the chief confederates of the Duchess of Maine, in her paper plot. There were other persons implicated, at the same time, in separate criminal correspondence with Cellamare; the most important among them was the Duke of Richlieu, a young and frivolous man of fashion, who had been so guilty as to offer to deliver up Bayonne, where he was commandant, to the Spanish troops. Magni, who introduced ambassadors to the court, and was fit for nothing more, was another contriver of this miserable affair.

The government for some time slept in security. It is affirmed that a notice of the conspiracy was received from England, but nothing sufficiently precise to enable the Regent to fix upon the persons engaged in it. Various accounts have been given of the manner in which the plot was finally detected. The most common is, that a secretary of Cellamare imprudently confided to a courtezan, in the house of La Fillon, a celebrated procuress, that he had been prevented

going to see her by the quantity of business he had been obliged to transact, in consequence of the departure of a confidential person for Madrid; and that La Fillon, the mistress of the house, who was well acquainted with the Abbé Dubois, immediately informed him of the confessions of the Secretary.* Another account, and a more authentic one, says, that a clerk in the King's library, of the name of Buvat, was employed to write for Cellamare, and revealed the secret to Dubois.† What is certain, is, that the Abbé Portocarrero, nephew of the Cardinal of that name, and Monteleon, son of the Spanish Ambassador, in England, two young men of pleasure, were entrusted by Cellamare with all the papers concerning the plot in which he was engaged, and were arrested on their journey at Poitiers.‡ The messenger arrived with the packet of letters just as the Regent was going to the Opera. Dubois examined the parcel, and informed the Regent generally of their contents on his return. Any other Prince would have been agitated by such a discovery, and have lost no time in learning the designs, and the names of his enemies. But the Regent, already become torpid by indulgence, preferred going to his supper society; and according to his usual habit, from that moment the doors were shut against all business, however great the urgency might be. Dubois did not fail to profit by this circumstance; he, of course, wished to preserve the life and power of the Regent;

* Voltaire. † Vie privée du C. Dubois. Mémoires Secrets du C. Dubois.

‡ The author of the life of the Regent says, that the travellers were overturned at Poitiers, and that their anxiety to save their portmanteau, caused their arrest. But had this been the case, the Regent would not have made a mystery of the matter to his mother. See Mémoires de Madame.

but he was not sorry to gain a title of recommendation with his enemies in case of reverse, and to attribute to the credit of his own intercession, the mercy which the Regent gave from inclination. In the mean time Cellamare had got notice of the seizure by a servant of Portocarrero, who rode back with all speed to Paris. In consequence of this circumstance, and the negligence of Dubois, he gained sixteen hours to destroy his papers; and on the following morning he went composedly to the house of Le Blanc, Secretary of State, and claimed the dispatches, which he said had no doubt been taken by mistake. But at the house of Le Blanc he found the Abbé Dubois, who informed him that his letters had been read, and communicated to him an official order he had obtained to examine all his other papers.

The papers seized at Poitiers, when examined, were found to contain draughts of letters intended to be written by Philip the Fifth, to the Parliament, an address from the nobility, asking him to assume the Regency, and lists of persons ready to take employment under him. Two of the letters were published by the Regent for his justification; the other papers were spread by the conspirators themselves to excite a ferment. The discovery of the plot excited, of course, great alarm among all persons any way implicated. An Abbé Brigaut, a man of the worst character, who had boasted to his friends, that if he were taken he would stand as long a siege in the Bastile as Charles the XIIth had done at Bender, was arrested, and confessed all he knew. The Duchess of Maine was sitting at cards when a M. Chatillon, a very heavy dull man, said, "There is a piece of news which is very laughable. They have taken a certain Abbé "Bri—Bri—;" at

last he recollected the name and continued: "What is diverting is, that he has told all." "Indeed!" said the Duchess of Maine, "that is very amusing." "Oh! it is enough to make one die of laughing," said M. Chatillon: "imagine all these persons so careful to keep their secrets, and this man names them every one." And he then burst into a laugh, in which the company declined to join.

The Abbé Brigaut had confided his papers to a Chevalier Du Mesnil, telling him they contained only his will. Du Mesnil upon the discovery of the plot opened the papers, and finding many persons implicated in a conspiracy, destroyed them. Nor would he acknowledge he had received them till the Abbé Brigaut had confest the fact. A certain Marquis Du Mesnil went to the Regent to disavow any relationship with his namesake. "Then I am sorry for you," said the Regent, "for he is a man of spirit and of honour."

Clemency of the Regent.

What is remarkable in this affair is, the singular moderation and clemency of the Regent. Although the plot was certainly directed against his authority, probably against his life, and more than sixty of the persons about the court were said to be implicated in it, he shewed no inclination to punish his enemies. Cellamare was conducted to the frontier, and a letter was addressed to foreign powers, justifying the violation of the law of nations, rendered necessary in this case. The Duke and Duchess of Maine were confined separately; several of their household, and some of their partisans were likewise arrested for the sake of precaution; the Duke of Richlieu was imprisoned in the Bastile. But when Dubois, with a list of the conspirators in his hand, was about to read it to the Council, the Regent stopt him,

and said " The council would be surprised to hear the names " of several persons who are under obligation to me, but I " will not put them to the pain of asking for a pardon, and I " am satisfied that this conduct will make them return to " their duty."* As this clemency did not proceed from fear or want of power, it produced a due effect, and the Regency was no more disturbed by conspiracies. There is no quality of a government which so much conciliates affection, as mercy properly exercised; none that so much exposes it to contempt, as impunity inopportunely suffered. Yet the difference consists less in the acts performed, than in the men who perform them; rulers who are feared may pardon with safety, where rulers who fear cannot do so without danger: for the people who worship the generosity which grants, trample upon the timidity which recedes. For this reason, a strong government is often more merciful than a weak one.

Having given due praise to the firmness of the Regent, we must now record his weakness. The imprisonment of the Duke of Richlieu occupied the heads and hearts of all the women of rank in Paris. Brought to court when he was yet a boy, he had made himself remarked by the beauty of his figure, and the easy grace of his manners; in a short time he was celebrated for his numerous and successful gallantries. His favourite pleasure was to supplant the great men of the court; and the Regent, more than once, found himself defeated in his amours by this presumptuous young man. One day the Cardinal Dubois finding him with one of his mistresses, complained violently of his conduct: Richlieu coolly replied, "Give me your list, then, and I will respect it." When confined for

The Duke of Richlieu.

* Vie de Phil. d'Orleans, i. 347.

the conspiracy of Cellamare, he was rather pleased than otherwise at the importance he acquired by being treated as a criminal of state. He walked on the terrace of the Bastile with his hair frizzed, and in a coat covered with gold lace, making signs to the ladies, who came in crowds in their carriages, and made the road joining the Bastile their favourite promenade.* He amused himself at the same time with having his favourite mistresses painted in the costume of nuns; Mademoiselle de Charolais, sister of the Duke of Bourbon, was represented as a recollet, others as capuchins.† The Regent, who said at first that he had sufficient evidence to cut off four heads, if Richlieu had as many, could not resist the levity and gaiety of this conduct, and he allowed the Cardinal de Noailles, his uncle, to carry him off to his country house at Conflans. He was afterwards sent further from Paris; but at length, his full pardon was obtained in a somewhat curious manner. Among other intrigues, Richlieu had seduced Mdlle. de Valois, daughter of the Regent, who was passionately in love with him; the Regent wished his daughter to marry the Duke of Modena; she obstinately refused for a long time, and at length only consented on the condition that Richlieu should be entirely pardoned. Such were the weights thrown into the scales of justice during the Regency!

Nobles of Brittany.

The nobles of Brittany who had been involved in the plots of Alberoni, having no court beauties to intercede for them, were not so mildly dealt with. Four were publicly executed, and several more banished from France. As they had engaged to rise upon the appearance of a Spanish fleet on the

* Mémoires de Madame, 133. † Mémoires de Madame, 134.

coast, it is impossible to dispute the justice of their sentence. Yet their discontent had a natural and excusable origin. The states of Brittany had demanded the accounts of Montaran, their treasurer. Nothing was more just. But Montaran had a brother, who, being a captain of the guards, and a favourite in the society of Paris, interested several women of rank in the insolvency of the treasurer, and the states were denied their just petition.* Hence a discontent, which many little slights fomented into rebellion.

Among those who had offered their services to Spain was De Mesmes, first President of the Parliament. Anxious to ascertain whether his intrigues had been discovered, he employed the agency of Madlle. de Chausseraye to obtain an audience of the Regent. The interview took place in her presence. The first President began with protesting his unalterable fidelity to the Regent: the Regent made no answer. De Mesmes thinking he was not discovered, renewed his protestations and asseverations. He was about to retire, when the Regent coolly presented to him a letter, by which he answered to the King of Spain for the Parliament. The President fell at the feet of the Prince, who giving him a glance of indignation, past into the other room. He might perhaps have been treated with severity, had not Mdlle. de Chausseraye followed the Regent, and skilfully suggested, how useful it would be to him to have a President of the Parliament in his power, whom he might always govern, by keeping him between hope and fear. The first President was not molested, and afterwards sold himself again at the price of a man of character.†

* Duclos, ii. 32. † Duclos, ii. 31.

Madame de Maintenon 1719.

Early in the year 1719 died Madame de Maintenon. From the time of the late King's death, she had lived in total retirement at St. Cyr, superintending the education of the seminary she had founded, and probably enjoying, as far as her age would permit, more happiness than when she had been tormented by the thorns of ambition. During the last years of her life, she scarcely saw any stranger but the widow of James the second, who sometimes came to dine with her: the ceremonial of two arm chairs, to show that both were Queens, though one had only reigned a few months, and the other not at all, is a singular relic of human vanity amid the ostentation of humility. When the Czar Peter came to France, he went from curiosity to pay a visit to St. Cyr: Madame de Maintenon, to avoid the difficulties of etiquette, received him in her bed. The Czar was offended, and asked her, through his interpreter, what was her illness; Madame de Maintenon replied, "Extreme old age." Peter opened the curtains, stared at her for some time, and went away. The letters of Madame de Maintenon have been published, and give some curious information respecting the times in which she lived. They are well written; but the prudence and reserve of her character, forbade her to unbosom herself with that open-hearted ease, which is the first charm of familiar letters. One large portion is occupied in correspondence with persons of the court; another in directions for the convents which she superintended; both together show a greater resemblance between these two modes of life than might at first have been supposed: the tedium, littleness, and monotony of the court; the envy, jealousy, and ambition of the convent.

Duchess of Berry. 1719.

In the summer of the same year died a very different person,

the Duchess of Berry, daughter of the Regent. From her childhood to her marriage she had shown evident signs of wilfulness and pride; from her marriage to her death she had joined to these qualities an unbounded licentiousness. At the commencement of the Regency she had paraded through Paris with trumpets and cymbals, an honour only allowed to the reigning sovereign. This display however was not allowed to be repeated; and another pretension, equally absurd, was defeated by the firmness of the diplomatic body. She succeeded however in obtaining a guard of honour, and by the decision of the Regent took precedence of her mother; a privilege which she used with the greatest haughtiness, scarcely ever paying her mother a visit, and making her feel that pride which the Duchess of Orleans was fond of displaying to others. With this exceeding arrogance of birth, the Duchess of Berry joined the lowest and most disgusting vices. Early in her career she formed an attachment to La Haye, an inferior officer in the household of her husband; afterwards, during the Regency, she was a principal person at the suppers of the Regent, which were often held at her own palace of the Luxemburg. Here this proud Princess gave way to the most disgusting debauch, in company with the vilest and most dissolute of the bad company of Paris. Her father's attachment to her was so tender, and so blind, that the malignity of the world failed not to give it a character of criminality, which perhaps it never assumed. The last serious passion of the Duchess of Berry was excited by the Count of Riom. Riom, in concert with a Madame de Mouchy, a lady of the household to whom he was attached, governed the Princess completely; he dictated her most trifling actions, and even pre-

scribed her dress, forcing her to change it after it was put on, and always directing that which he knew she disliked. The Princess cried, but always obeyed. Riom, it is said, acted by the advice of Lauzun, his uncle, who had found by experience, that when a woman is passionately in love, the worst treatment only contributes to rivet her affection. To the two apparently incompatible qualities of pride and debauch, the Duchess of Berry joined a third, no less extraordinary, namely, devotion. She used to retire for whole days to the convent of the Carmelite nuns, where she wept, fasted, and prayed with all the fervour of a magdalen. A pious nun seeing her apparently so contrite, exclaimed with astonishment and rapture, "Good God! madam, is it possible the world can talk so scandalously of you! what a wicked world it is! I am sure you live here like a saint!" The Princess smiled and returned to her palace, where in the hours of her orgies she recounted this trait of the pious simplicity of the carmelite.*

A singular scene occurred a short time before the death of the Duchess of Berry. She was delivered of a daughter, and after her confinement, which she tried to keep secret, was taken seriously ill. Languet, the *curé* of St. Sulpice, went to her house and told the Regent, who was there, that she must be prepared for receiving the sacrament, and that in the first place the Count de Riom and Madame de Mouchy must be dismissed. The Regent in despair sent for the Cardinal de Noailles, who, when he arrived was no less obstinate than the *curé*; and on the hesitation of the Regent, indignantly declared that if the father would not speak to his daughter, he would do so him-

* Duclos, t. ii.

self. The Regent in consternation then entered the room; but as soon as he began to explain his mission, the Duchess burst forth into invectives against the insolence of the bigots, and his weakness in listening to them. The Cardinal was unable to obtain admittance, but the *curé* watched the door with two of his brethren for two days and two nights, till the Princess was out of danger. When recovered, Riom prevailed upon her to consent to a secret marriage.*

Soon after this the Princess caught an illness by exposing herself to the night air in giving a supper to her father at Meudon, and after a few days died at La Muette, in the Bois de Boulogne. She is said to have shown great piety and resignation in her last moments. Her daughter by Riom was afterwards a nun at Pontoise.

Count Horn.

Towards the end of the career of Law a murder was committed in Paris, remarkable both from its connexion with the history of the times, and from the rank of one of the criminals. A younger brother of the illustrious family of Horn, whose mother was a daughter of the Prince of Ligne, after passing through every kind of profligacy, had arrived at the last stage of moral depravity at the early age of two and twenty. In concert with Mille, a half-pay captain, and Lestang, the son of a Flemish banker, he planned the murder of one of the rich stock-jobbers of the day. Pretending to bargain for actions, these men enticed their victim into a cabaret in the Rue de Venise, where they stabbed him. A waiter of the house going into the room saw a man bathed in blood, and instantly locking the door ran out to give the alarm. Lestang, who was on the staircase, made off to their common lodging,, and escaped, taking with him their most portable

* Duclos. St. Simon.

effects. Mille got into the street, but was followed, and soon taken. Horn himself was stopped getting out of the window. He had presence of mind enough to say that he had narrowly escaped being assassinated in defending the murdered man; but unfortunately for him, Mille, on his apprehension, had confessed all.

Now began the solicitations from the relations of the Count, to obtain, if not his pardon, at least a commutation of the sentence of the wheel for some other punishment less infamous. They represented that no daughter of the family of Horn could be received into any chapter after such a disgrace to the third generation. But the Regent was inexorable. When the relations spoke of the shame, he said, in the sense of a verse of Corneille, that the disgrace lay in the crime, and not in the punishment. When they told him that Count Horn was related to him through his mother; he said, "Well, then, I will take my share of the disgrace, and that may console the other relations." Yet not to rate his justice too high, it must be said, that his firmness on this subject was chiefly owing to Law, who while the system lasted, was anxious for the security of all persons who carried their fortunes in their pockets.

When all hope of favour was lost, two of the noble relations of the Count found means to penetrate into the prison, and offer him poison, which however, he refused; whereupon they left him with indignation, saying, "Go, wretch, you are only fit to die by the hands of the executioner!" He might have replied, that they were more anxious for their honour than for his; and that a voluntary death, while it deprived him of all chance of pardon, was enjoined by no duty to God or man. The two criminals were executed on

the 21st March. Before the execution, and when upon the wheel, Horn asked pardon of his accomplice, which seems to imply that he was the contriver of the murder. But while all Paris was moved at the fate of Horn, no one cared for the destiny of a half-pay captain. March 1720.

The day after the perpetration of the crime, a gentleman arrived at Paris charged by the elder brother of the Count, with orders to pay his debts, and with the means of obliging him to leave France. A day, or even an hour, sooner or later, determines the guilt or innocence, the misery or the fortune of man.*

In the spring of 1720, the ancient and opulent town of Marseilles was visited by a dreadful calamity. A vessel coming from Syria, unknowingly brought the plague among its crew; the merchandize was landed, and the time of quarantine abridged in an ignorant and dangerous security. The Plague at Marseilles. 1720.

Soon the Plague broke forth in the town. The government, with its usual precaution, ordered the port to be shut. At first the inhabitants complained of the needless interruption of their commerce: presently their minds were absorbed by the terror of the advancing desolation. The evil was the more formidable from the want of foresight and preparation: the rich had no other defence than flight, the poor had no alternative but plague or famine. The parliament of Aix inclosed the town and a small space round it with a cordon of safety; the miserable inhabitants sought to avoid each other, and failed: thus losing the benefit of mutual succour, without obtaining the advantage of separation. In their vague fear some fled to the sea, and others sought the streams of

* St. Simon. Duclos.

of fresh water; but neither the sea nor the rivers afforded any security. The streets became choked up with dead bodies, which propagated and extended the disease of which they had been the victims.

Estelle and Moustier.

In this calamity two *echevins* of the city, Estelle and Moustier, displayed a courage, which, seeking no reward either in wordly fame or worldly greatness, ought, if men were rational, to be esteemed far above that of a soldier. They regulated the supply of provisions, and superintended their distribution. Assisted by a Chevalier Rose, they cleared the streets and houses of dead bodies, and buried them in deep ditches dug for the purpose. The carts containing the bodies were conducted by criminals condemned to the gallies, who were supplied at the rate of 80 a week for this employment. Not one of the men employed in this service survived: the officer who furnished them had some scruples in sending them; in other circumstances he would have been guilty of murder.

The Bishop of Marseilles, Belzunce, came to add his efforts to those of Rose, Estelle, and Moustier. If his exorcisms were superstitious; his attributing the plague to the anger of heaven against the Jansenists ridiculous; and the processions through the streets which he himself led barefoot, more likely to increase than diminish the malady; yet his intrepid intercourse with those affected by the contagion at all stages of the disorder, and his constant presence in the hospitals, supported the courage of the citizens, and restrained the profligate carelessness common at such a season. Still more was due to the pious nuns, whose devotion to the service of the sick is the honour of their sex, the glory of the Roman catholic church, and one of the noblest trophies of humanity.

At length Langeron, a naval officer, was sent to command in chief by the Regent. His authority enabled him to clear the port of dead bodies, and to carry into execution more strict regulations for preventing the increase of the contagion.

On the 26th of September a violet north wind swept through the town and country. At first this storm was considered a great misfortune, since it destroyed a new hospital which was building outside the walls of the town; but it was found that it had likewise cleared the air; and if it did not stop the plague, at least gave a new vigour to the frames of the inhabitants. From this time the contagion abated, although it did not finally cease till June, 1721. In the autumn of 1720, two vessels arrived in the port charged with corn for the poor, on the part of the Pope: an act worthy the head of a christian church.

The Chevalier Rose, who had behaved with so much courage and benevolence, received no reward, and died some time after in indigence. The recompenses of the government were reserved for the women of pleasure of the court, their protectors and protected.

Dubois, Archbishop of Cambray. June, 1720.

The Abbé Dubois finding his influence with the Regent unbounded, now aspired, with the usual ambition of his order, to be a cardinal. In the midst of his intrigues for this purpose, the Cardinal de la Tremouille, Archbishop of Cambray, died at Rome. As Dubois could not yet hope for the hat, he turned his eyes towards the archbishopric; an income of 150,000 livres was a temptation which he could not resist; and neither the recent reputation of Fenelon in that see, nor the general scandal which he knew would accompany his appointment, deterred him for a moment from his enterprize. Among

the singular means which he employed to effect it, was the intervention of the King of England. By his desire, Destouches, the well known comic author, then minister in England, applied to George the First, with whom he was a favourite, for a letter to the Regent, soliciting him to appoint Dubois Archbishop of Cambray. George the First was startled at this request. "How do you imagine," he said, "that a Protestant prince can meddle in the appointment of a French archbishop? The Regent will laugh, and wont do it." "Excuse me, Sir; he will laugh, but he will do it:—in fine, my fortune depends on your Majesty's conduct. If your Majesty does not write this letter, the fault will be imputed to me, and I shall be ruined." At the same time he presented the letter ready written; and the King goodnaturedly said, "Well, if it is any pleasure to you, I will sign it."*

Thus Dubois, partly by address, and partly by impudence, obtained the archbishopric from the Regent. As he had been hitherto only tonsured, he now was ordained sub-deacon, deacon, and priest, on the same day. The Cardinal de Noailles virtuously refused his sanction to this disgraceful mockery. The Duke of Mazarin said he believed Dubois had received at the same time his first communion. When he appeared in the council room, after the ceremony, the Prince of Conti made him a satirical compliment on the novelty of the event. Dubois listened, and replied with the utmost gravity, "Your highness shews yourself extremely ill-acquainted with ecclesiastical history, otherwise you would have known that St. Ambrose had done just the same as I." At this extraordinary parallel some turned away to conceal

* Duclos. t. 2, p. 80.

their indignation; others laughed outright; but Dubois tranquilly debated the matter till every one was tired, and then turned to the affairs of the council. The Cardinal Prince of Rohan, Bishop of Strasburg, put himself forward to perform the ceremony of the consecration. One of the assistant bishops was a man of no character; the other was the celebrated and virtuous Massillon. If his conduct on this occasion is not to be justified, and indeed caused bitter repentance to Massillon himself, it is to be said in mitigation, that he was newly appointed to a bishopric; and that by the kindness of the Regent he had been furnished with money to pay the necessary expenses of his first establishment, which he found himself unable to defray.* Thus it is that he who accepts an obligation from a bad man, exposes himself to the alternative of ingratitude or immorality; of either disobeying the dictates of his heart, or incurring the reproaches of his conscience.

The Regent himself was present at the consecration. He had resolved not to go, but was persuaded to do so by his mistress, Madame de Parabére, who told him that if he did not go, Dubois would attribute it to her, and soon ruin her in his good opinion. The story was told the next day by Madame de Parabére herself to another of her lovers, through whom it became known. Of this kind is generally the best, though not the most respectable authority for French history.

About this time Dubois brought forward Breteuil, intendant of Limoges, who is said to have been employed by him to destroy the records of a marriage he had contracted in his Breteuil.

* Duclos, ii. p. 86.

youth.* As a reward for his ingenuity Breteuil was brought to court, and in due time made Secretary of State. The quality most conspicuous about him was his ignorance. He remarked, that nearly all the great pictures of Christ were by a painter of the name of INRI. Some one reproaching him, ventured to say to his face that he did not even know who wrote the Pater (or Lord's Prayer). Breteuil was confounded, till a M. Caumartin whispered in his ear, "Moses." Presently Breteuil renewed the conversation, and said, in a careless way, "To be sure I know who wrote the Pater—it was Moses."

Dubois made a Cardinal. 1721.

Dubois omitted no means, fair or foul, of obtaining the hat of Cardinal. In 1718 the Pretender had endeavoured to tempt him, by one of the few bribes he had left, and offered him his nomination; but Dubois was too much confirmed in the opposite policy to accept the offer. With George the First he had made a merit of this refusal, and had obtained from that Sovereign letters both to the Regent and the Emperor, urgently seconding his wishes.† The Regent himself wrote to the Pope on the subject in the most pressing manner, although at the same time he said publicly, that if Dubois dared to talk to him of obtaining the hat, he would have him thrown out of window. Such are the miserable shifts of weak minds, equally incapable of refusing to do what they are asked, and of acknowledging actions which public opinion condemns.

* Duclos, t. ii, 253. The editor of the Mémoires Secrets du C. Dubois, questions the fact of his marriage, but the mere absence of authentic testimony in a case like this, does not seem to me sufficient to overthrow the circumstantial account of St. Simon and Duclos. † Duclos. Mémoires Secrets du C. Dubois.

There is another remark to be made on this subject. All priests who have obtained high situations under catholic sovereigns have desired to be cardinals, in order to protect themselves from their masters in case of disgrace. For this purpose they usually sacrifice the interest of the state they govern to the wishes of the Pope, a potentate by no means celebrated for granting his favours gratis. And yet, although this conduct is obviously injurious both to the Prince and his people, it has never prevented the monarchs of France and Spain (with the exception of Lewis the Fourteenth), from choosing priests as their ministers.

It would be tiresome to enter into the details of the mutual treacheries of Dubois and the worthless priests who were his agents at Rome; history must blush when she is obliged to record the struggles of men so base, to gratify an unwarrantable ambition. Dubois, resolved to spare no means to obtain his favourite object, considered how he could best please the papal court. It was suggested by the Cardinal de Rohan and the jesuits, that nothing would be so acceptable at Rome as the reception of the bull Unigenitus by the Parliament of Paris. Dubois availed himself of the suggestion; the measure which had appalled Lewis the Fourteenth in the plenitude of his power, and arrested Le Tellier in the full tide of his bigotry, was now undertaken by the atheistical minister of a dissolute and unbelieving Prince. The facility of the Regent in this affair was surprising: he, who in the beginning of his power had prided himself on holding the scales equal between the different parties, in the end consented to be the tool of the jesuits, and to sanction acts of the most arbitrary kind, to further the favourite object of their bigotry.

By the contrivance of Dubois a declaration, accepting the bull, was read in the council of Regency, and without taking their opinions, was considered as approved. After this it was read in like manner in the great council, a judicial body, supposed to be less refractory than the parliament: yet the opposition to the bull was animated and genuine; many of the magistrates spoke with force and effect; one of these, of the name of Perelle, being asked by the Chancellor where he had found such maxims, replied quickly, "In the speeches of the late chancellor D'Aguesseau."*

Acceptance of the bull Unigenitus. Dec. 1720.

Some opposition was still made by the Parliament and by the Cardinal de Noailles: D'Aguesseau even offered to resign. It was at this time that the Parliament was banished to Pontoise. Law, full of schemes on every subject, proposed that the magistrates should be repaid the sums they had advanced for their offices, and be replaced by judges dependent on the pleasure of the crown. But milder methods were taken, and a shower of gold overcame all resistance. The Parliament acted as they always have done; deriving their origin from the crown, and not from the people, they avoided a serious rupture, and contenting themselves with a few popular huzzas, made their peace with the court. Such will always be the conduct of any assembly in a monarchy not founded upon popular election. All other opposition soon subsided. The Cardinal de Noailles was growing timid and weary of dispute; the Chancellor had lately regained a very good place, and was loath to leave it.†

Thus the constitution Unigenitus, a theological decision on the abstruse points of grace and free-will, was introduced

* Duclos. t. ii. † Duclos. t. ii, 120, 128.

into France to gratify the malice of the jesuit Le Tellier, and made the law of the kingdom, to promote the ambition of the profligate priest Dubois. Not only did Dubois establish the authority of the bull, but he restored the formulary, renouncing the five propositions said to be of Jansen, which, since the death of Louis the Fourteenth, had been much neglected. Now, all persons who accepted benefices or offices were obliged to sign it; and the Regent had the subject so much at heart, that he nearly quarrelled with his daughter, the Abbess of Chelles, who refused her signature.*

Tencin.

With this bribe in his hand, Dubois pushed his favourite point at Rome. The Abbé Tencin was despatched to add fresh activity to the negociations. Tencin was a man of the most worthless character. For his success in the world he was chiefly indebted to his sister, who, after having been a nun in a convent near Grenoble, had renounced her vows, and under the title of canoness, sought in Paris gallantry and amusement. In 1717 she gave birth to a child, who became celebrated in the world by the name of D'Alembert; not long afterwards she succeeded in acquiring, as mistress of Dubois, a considerable influence in the disposal of public patronage. Her house was the resort of all the men of wit and letters in Paris; she herself was remarkable for the grace and dexterity of her conversation. In this situation she employed all her influence to promote the fortunes of her brother: the Abbé Tencin was appointed to operate the mock conversion of Law, and having acquired a large sum by means of that adventurer, was now chosen for the mission to Rome. A little before his departure an unpleasant accident

* Vie de P. d'Orleans. ii. 289.

occurred. He was accused before the Parliament of simony. Finding that the advocate employed by his adversary did not press the cause, Tencin himself addressed his judges, and seizing what he thought a favourable moment, offered to clear himself from the charge by a solemn oath. The lawyer opposed to him, who had been waiting for this opportunity, immediately said that this was not necessary, as he had in his hands the original contract, signed by Tencin, which he immediately produced. The judges were transported with indignation, and passed a decree consigning the accused to infamy; the audience were struck with the sight of so much profligacy, and raised a shout of abhorrence; the Abbé Tencin himself slunk away in confusion; but he went nevertheless to Rome, as the fit representative of the government of France.

Death of the Pope.

A much greater man than the Abbé Tencin was prevailed upon to undertake the journey to Rome. Dubois insinuated to the Cardinal de Rohan, that if he would obtain the wished for hat, his own influence with the Regent should be exerted to make the Cardinal prime minister. The Cardinal de Rohan was about to set off on his mission with this delusive hope, when intelligence arrived of the death of the Pope, which of course quickened his journey.

The Cardinal de Rohan took Tencin for his conclavist, and left Laffiteau in the city to transmit the letters of Dubois. In spite of the pretended seclusion of the conclave, Laffiteau found means to enter it every day; and bribes to a large amount were offered to the holy Cardinals. Tencin however concluded the whole by a master-stroke. He promised all the influence of the French party and French money to Cardinal Conti, on condition that he would sign a written promise to

make Dubois a cardinal, if elected. Conti signed the promise, and became Pope, with the name of Innocent the thirteenth.* May, 1721.

When elected, however, the new Pope either felt, or feigned scruples at giving the first dignity of the church to a man of notorious bad life and unbelief. After a long and fruitless negociation, Tencin threatened to publish his promise if he did not speedily accomplish it. The Pope alarmed at this threat thought it better to compound; and all his scruples were finally overcome by a gift of 12,000 crowns, to buy a library. Dubois was chosen a member of the Sacred College. Nomination of Dubois. July 6, 1821.

Tencin however was not satisfied: he still retained the promise; and again threatened to publish it unless he himself was likewise made a Cardinal. Innocent saw himself entangled in such a labyrinth of vice and scandal, that he fell ill and died.

Dubois received his accession of dignity with great apparent modesty, and even disarmed some of his most decided enemies by the propriety of his behaviour. He looked however to the enjoyment of his new honours: as a first step, the Cardinal de Rohan was admitted to the council of Regency, and made all the nobility indignant by taking his place immediately after the Princes of the blood. The fury of the nobles was much increased when, at their next meeting, they saw Dubois assume the same pre-eminence, and all by one accord left the room. The Duke of Noailles, for once compelled by anger to speak sincerely, said to Dubois as he went out, "This day will be memorable in history; it will be recorded that your entrance into the council caused it to be deserted by all the nobility of the kingdom."† What is more singular is, that D'Aguesseau, was likewise

* Mémoires Secrets du C. Dubois. † Vie de P. D'Orleans. ii. 249.

so much offended at the precedence claimed by the new Cardinal, that he resigned his office, which was given to M. d'Armenonville, a man of slender capacity. The violent indignation displayed on this point of etiquette is the more surprising, as no one doubted of the King's power, when of age, to give precedence to cardinals in the council; Richelieu and Mazarin had enjoyed it before, and Fleury obtained it afterwards without resistance; the cavil now raised, was founded solely on the minority of the King.* What an insight does this squabble give into the character of the great men of the time! They submitted quietly to the predominant influence of Dubois over all the public affairs; they made no objection to the admittance into the council of a man without truth or honesty, but they could not bear that he should sit in a chair which betokened a rank higher than their own!

From this censure we may perhaps exempt D'Aguesseau: it is possible he may have used the precedence as a pretext, and that his real motive was disgust at the character of Dubois; but if so, he would have done better to have left no doubt of his sentiments.

The King's Illness. July 31st.

On the 31st of July the King was seized with a violent fever, accompanied with delirium, and some alarming symptoms. The medical attendants were divided in opinion. Helvetius, father of the celebrated author, said that bleeding was necessary, and unless it was resorted to he would not answer for the King's life. The rest were all violently against him; but supported by some other physicians who were called in, Helvetius was allowed to bleed the King. As soon as the operation was performed the patient was visibly relieved, the

* Vie de P. D'Orleans, ii. p. 251.

fever abated, and five days afterwards was able to rise and receive the compliments of the foreign ministers and public bodies.*

Marshal Villeroy gave a new proof, on this occasion, that a low mind is often joined with pride and ostentation. On the 25th of August, celebrated as the King's birthday, an immense crowd was assembled in the garden of the Tuilleries. Villeroy took the King out on the balcony and said to him repeatedly, "Look at this concourse of people, my master; it all belongs to you; it is all yours," with many other phrases of the same kind.†

Treaty of Marriage with Spain. 1721.

The Regent was anxious to renew the intimate relations of the two branches of the House of Bourbon. For this purpose Dubois, by his direction, concluded a treaty of alliance with Philip the fifth, according to which Lewis the fifteenth was to marry the Infanta of Spain, and the Prince of Asturias was to espouse Mdlle. de Montpensier, daughter of the Regent. Philip the fifth was overjoyed at the prospect of renewing the family ties, and giving a Queen to France; while the Regent was no less pleased at the prospect of conciliating the only enemy who had ever been formidable to him, and raising his daughter to the throne of Spain. Lewis the Fifteenth alone shewed some boyish anger at being married at twelve years old to a child of three, but Villeroy and Fleury took the part of the Regent, and the marriage was approved in council. Fleury at this time refused the archbishoprick of Rheims,‡ the first ecclesiastical dignity in the kingdom. It has naturally been inferred that he already aspired to greater things; yet it was a bold calculation which took for its basis, that he should either displace or survive the Duke of Orleans.

* Duclos, t. ii. 155. † Duclos, ii. 160. ‡ Duclos, t. ii. p. 161.

Dubois Prime Minister. 1722.

One object of ambition still remained for Dubois, namely, the place and title of prime minister. His dignity of Cardinal enabled him to aspire to this honour, for which his birth would otherwise have disqualified him.

The manner in which he accomplished his object is the highest proof of his art. He had at first obtained the management of public affairs by encouraging the debauchery of the Regent, and by relieving him from the weight of business at the hours devoted to his minions and mistresses. He now attained the supreme and entire direction of the royal power, by a totally opposite course of conduct. By his intrigues he banished from court the Duke of Noailles, Canillac, Nocé, and Broglie, the most agreeable men of the society of the Regent. An accident enabled him to remove the court to Versailles. A dispute arose respecting the appointment of a confessor to the King: by the protection of Dubois, Father Linieres, a Jesuit, was named to this important post. The Cardinal de Noailles refused to allow the Jesuit to confess the King, and the court was removed to Versailles that the confession might be made at St. Cyr, in the diocese of Chartres.*

This circumstance tended greatly to augment the influence of Dubois. At Versailles the Regent, unable to know the opinion of the people, or to see any but the flatterers of his minister, became a mere tool in his hands. Every man addressed himself to the Cardinal, in preference to the Regent. At the same time Dubois took care to load his master with business, which he knew he had no longer vigour to dispatch.

The only two men who were obstacles in the way of Dubois, were Villeroy and St. Simon. The cardinal endea-

* Duclos, ii, 130, 134.

voured to gain both. Villeroy was an old favourite of Lewis the Fourteenth: proud of his former honours and his present dignity; and supplying by the manners and experience of an old courtier, the real emptiness and vanity of his character. Dubois attempted a reconciliation with him, which at first promised to succeed; but in the midst of his first visit, Villeroy losing his temper, began to pour forth a torrent of invective against the character of his host. At length he concluded by saying, "I have but one piece of advice to give you; have me arrested; yes, have me arrested; for if you do not, I will not stop till I have overthrown you." Dubois took his advice; the arrest was accomplished without any difficulty. Villeroy raged in vain against the court and the people for not taking up his cause, and the Duke of Charost quietly took possession of his place.*

Villeroy being thus removed, the next person to gain was the Duke of St. Simon. St. Simon, who has been often mentioned, was an honest and an able man, but his integrity and his talents were alike neutralized by a ridiculous estimate of his rank, a prodigious notion of the importance of etiquette, and a number of narrow prejudices with respect both to persons and affairs. His contempt for the meanness he saw around him, and his hatred of the Jesuits, often led him to an exaggerated notion of the vices, the schemes, and the objects of his cotemporaries. He was strongly attached to the Regent, and yet it is remarkable, that he seems to have had little influence upon his actions; while the Regent, by knowing his weaknesses often swayed the mind of St. Simon.

In order to acquire the support of St. Simon, Dubois sent

* St. Simon. Duclos, ii. 220, et seq.

him a message by Bellisle, who afterwards played a distinguished part in public affairs. St. Simon returned a discouraging answer, but not an absolute refusal.

Interview of the Regent and the Duke of St. Simon.

Every thing being now prepared, St. Simon going one evening to the Regent, found Bellisle at the door, who entreated him to use all his efforts to make Dubois prime minister. St. Simon did not give any answer, but proceeded to his business with the Regent, who, contrary to his usual gay and familiar manner, appeared grave, absent and uneasy. At length St. Simon asking him what was the reason of his absence, he hesitated, and was confused. St. Simon then asked him if there was any truth in what was reported, that Dubois was to be made prime minister. The Regent appeared relieved by this question, and answered with apparent frankness, "that it was true, Dubois was dying to obtain this post; that for his own part he was tired of business, and of the constraint of Versailles; that at Paris he could at least retire at supper, with a society which was always ready at hand; but, that to pass the whole day occupied with business only to be wearied all the evening, was a thing which surpassed his strength."

St. Simon replied ironically, that this reasoning was so solid it could not be answered. The Regent then said with more emphasis, that no one could imagine the fatigue of the days he past, nor the tiresomeness of the evenings spent with the Duchess of Orleans; and that he did not know where to go to amuse himself. To this St. Simon replied by quoting the example of the Prince of Conti, who, although out of favour with Lewis the Fourteenth, had always collected around him the best and most agreeable company of the court. He asked, what hindered the Duke of Orleans, Regent of the kingdom, with all

the agreeable qualities of the Prince of Conti, from having suppers at Versailles, composed of the most distinguished and most remarkable persons in the kingdom? That to do this, it was only necessary to prefer good company to bad; to leave off that language of debauch and obscenity which had hitherto made it an honour to avoid his society; and to give up those disgraceful associates, whose drunkenness and indecency were unpardonable after the age of twenty; that he could not disguise the indignation and contempt with which the obscure companions of his scandalous evenings were regarded, and that at a time when the King's majority was approaching, it was more peculiarly necessary not to give any hold to his enemies, by which they might remove him from power. He concluded by saying, that this was the first time he had opened his lips on this subject, but that he had been forced to break silence, by the prospect of the abyss into which the Regent was about to fall.

The Duke of Orleans leaning with his elbows on his bureau, heard this discourse in silence. When it was over, he said it was all very true; that moreover, he had no longer any passion for women; and that wine, far from being agreeable, had become disgusting to him. On hearing this confession, St. Simon exclaimed; "Then you must be possessed "by the devil, to ruin yourself in this world and in the next, "for an attraction which no longer gives you any pleasure. "What is the use of so much talent and so much experience; "nay, what is the use of your very senses, which in spite of "yourself advise you on the side of reason? With this apathy "and disgust, what pleasure can you have in your suppers "followed by a riot, that would make any one but yourself

" stop his ears with horror? The pleasure of illusion is a " pleasure that soon passes; it is the deplorable resource of " an old debauchee, who consoles his dotage with the vile " recollections excited by the filth to which he listens." After this, St. Simon besought the Regent to give the nation the satisfaction of seeing their ruler lead a rational life, worthy the master of the kingdom, and to deliver them from the fear of seeing the King fall into the same excesses: more pardonable it was true at his age and with such an example, but yet so intolerable upon the throne, which is fenced round with a more strict observance of decency than the dwelling of the meanest subject. He concluded, by exhorting the Prince to avoid the fate of Gaston, Duke of Orleans, who died at Blois, abandoned and despised.

After a short silence the Regent raised himself in his chair, and said, " Well, then, I will go and plant cabbages at Villers- " Cotterets!" Villers-Cotterets was the country house of the Duke of Orleans. But St. Simon combated the plan of retirement as much as he had done the former project, and (needlessly perhaps) represented to his master, that with his abilities and connexions, he would never be left to the quiet enjoyment of repose. The Regent walked up and down the room for some time without speaking; at last turning suddenly to St. Simon, and taking him by the arm, he asked him if he did not recollect Dubois the servant of St. Laurent, and thinking himself lucky in being so: then passing in review the whole life of Dubois, he said, " Well! with all this he is not satisfied, and " he persecutes me to be declared prime minister, and when he " is that, he still will not be satisfied: what would he have " more? . . . make himself God Almighty if he could." " It

" is for you, Sir, who know him so well, to take care not to " make him the stepping ladder, by which he will mount over " your head." " Oh! I will prevent that——I will prevent " that!"

After walking about some time longer the Regent sate down, and keeping his head between his hands and his elbows on the bureau for near ten minutes, at length said in a feeble voice, and with a look of shame, " but why wait " and not declare it?" Such was the result of this long conversation; and the utmost St. Simon could obtain was, that the decision should be put off to the next day.

The next day St. Simon found the Regent alone in his room, walking up and down. " Well!" he cried, " what more " have we to say on this business? It seems to me that every " thing is said, and that nothing remains but to declare it." St. Simon answered, " that for a thing of this importance, it " was a decision soon made." The Regent replied, " that he had thought much of it, but that in truth he was burthened with business all day, weariness all the evening, and the persecutions of Dubois every instant."

St. Simon endeavoured to rally, and made a long recapitulation of his former reasoning. When he had done, the Regent said in a tone of affliction, " There must be an end of " this; there only remains to declare it immediately." St. Simon immediately took leave and left the room. In the anti-chamber he found Bellisle, who asked with impatience how he got on: " Admirably," said St. Simon; " I have con- " cluded the business." A needless piece of dissimulation.

I have given this long dialogue, because nothing can paint so well the infirmity of mind, produced by the mingled influ-

ence of power and vice. What would appear more desirable, than the supreme government of such a kingdom as France, full of valour, arts, ingenuity, and talent? What more sordid, than low debauchery in bad company to a man satiated with the indulgence of his senses? Yet this able prince surrended the one for the miserable relics of the other.

It is worth while to mention, that another account is given of the reasons which determined the Regent to gratify the wishes of Dubois. It is said that Laffiteau, Bishop of Sisteron, a prelate who had ruined his constitution and character by his licentious life, pleaded the cause of the Cardinal with his master. "It is folly in him to wish it," said the Regent; "he cannot live six months." "Is that certain?" —"Quite: I will send the surgeon to you, who will confirm "it." Then I advise your Royal Highness to grant his "request, and the sooner the better." "Why so?" "Be- "cause the King will soon be of age, and then you can only "retain your authority by becoming prime minister. But to "assume this title at once, would be unexampled, and excite "objections; give it therefore to Dubois, and after his death "it will seem easy and natural to inherit his place, which you "will have the appearance of taking from attachment to the "King."* The account given by St. Simon seems to me, however, the more probable.

Death of Madame. 1723.

The time now arrived for the King's coronation; it was performed with the accustomed solemnity at Rheims. In the beginning of the year 1723 died Madame, mother of the Regent; a princess, whose character has been amply pourtrayed by her cotemporaries, and in her own letters. She

* Duclos, t. ii. 216, 219.

was very ugly and very good humoured, had much German pride, but likewise much German honesty; and if her strong aversions were sometimes caused by prejudice, they were often justly inspired by the vices of the court at which she lived. An epitaph was devised for her,—"Here lies Idleness," —meaning that she was the mother of all vice.

On the 16th of February, the King having entered his fourteenth year, received the compliments of the court upon his coming of age. Feb. 1723.

Few events of any kind illustrate or disgrace the life of Dubois after his attaining the honour of prime minister. He took his seat in the French Academy, and Fontenelle addressed him in a speech loaded with encomiastic epithets.* The clergy, which had not assembled since the year 1715, being called together this year, unanimously elected Dubois their president. Vile and precipitate adulation! May.

Death of Cardinal Dubois.

It was the custom in France for the troops at a review, to pay to a prime minister nearly the same honours which were paid to the king; a custom probably introduced by the martial temper of Richlieu. Dubois was ambitious of this distinction, and at the risk of his life got on horseback at a review which took place at Meudon.† This imprudence hastened the progress of his disease; an abscess burst; and the surgeons declared that unless he underwent an operation, he had not four days to live. Dubois swore at the surgeons, and refused; nor was it till the Duke of Orleans arrived and prayed him to submit, that he consented to undergo the operation. It was previously proposed to him to receive the communion: "That is soon said," he replied, "but there is a

* Vie de P. d'Orleans, ii. 353. † Duclos, ii. 255. St. Simon.

ceremony for cardinals different from that of other people, and as I do not know it, you must go and ask the Cardinal Bissy, at Paris." Thus he gained time, and avoided the communion: he was shut up with a friar, however, for seven or eight minutes to make his confession. When the surgeons performed the operation they declared, from the nature of the wound, that he could not live many hours. Twenty-four hours afterwards he died grinding his teeth, and swearing at the surgeons to his last moments.*

Dubois died immensely rich. His political and ecclesiastical preferments amounted to about 574,000 livres a year. Added to this, he is said to have received a pension of £40,000. a year from England, which, if true, would make his whole income amount to nearly £64,000. a year. But it is probable that the amount of his pension is exaggerated; and very possible that it never existed. He had accumulated a great sum in personals, which fell first to his brother, and afterwards to his nephew, a simple and virtuous canon in the church, who was ashamed of the reputation of his uncle. The greater part of the succession he gave to the poor; the rest he employed in building a handsome monument, with an inscription which, after enumerating all the titles of the Cardinal, ends with these words:—

Solidiora et stabiliora bona mortuo precare.

I have not much to add to what I have before said of the character of Dubois. His chief talent lay in intrigue, and in governing the Duke of Orleans. He is said to have employed so much of his time in this last occupation, that he had no leisure left for public affairs; and a story is current of his taking

* St. Simon. Duclos. ii. 267.

up a large parcel of unsealed letters and throwing them into the fire, saying, "Now I have brought up all my arrears." Other accounts represent him as very industrious; rising at five every morning to go through the public business. But this account seems to rest on a plan never executed, given him by his chief clerk; he was quick in doing business, but could hardly have been regular. Anecdotes of Dubois.

Dubois was sober and temperate in his habits, though he kept a magnificent table, and spared no expence becoming his rank and station. Many anecdotes are related of his ungovernable temper. He would often get up and run round the room upon the tables and chairs, even in the presence of the Regent. Those who attended his audience, of whatever rank they might be, were often dismissed with rudeness, if not with oaths. One day a lady of the court went to wait upon him to thank him for a favour conferred upon her. She had no sooner begun "Monseigneur," than Dubois interrupted her; "Oh! Monseigneur, Monseigneur, it can't be done"—"But Monseigneur"—"By all the devils, when I tell you it cannot be."—"Monseigneur,"—began again the poor lady, when Dubois seized her by the shoulders, turned her round, and pushed her out of the room.*

With a violent temper Dubois was not ill-natured. An officer who had long attended his levee to make an application, burst out a laughing at seeing him swear violently: Dubois came up to him, and said, "I see you are no fool; you shall have what you ask for." Another time he was swearing at his clerks, saying, that with thirty clerks he could not get his business done: Venier, his secretary, after looking at him a

* St. Simon.

long time in silence, answered, "Monseigneur, take one clerk more to swear and scold for you; half your time will be saved, and your business will be done." Dubois laughed, and was appeased. It must be said to his praise, that he seems to have been quite exempt from cruelty.

The hold which Dubois maintained over the Regent was in great part owing to the badness of his character. The Duke of Orleans was a general disbeliever in human probity; he thought every man profoundly selfish; and therefore while he distrusted men of virtue, he concluded that Dubois, whom every one else despised or hated, would naturally cling to his service as the only means of advancement. Dubois raised himself by this ladder. One day the Regent asked him the contents of a paper he had given him to sign; "Sign, Monseigneur," he replied, "You know I have a natural instinct for all that concerns your interest." Thus it frequently happens that he who prides himself on his knowledge of human nature, and penetration into character, becomes the slave of some vile scoundrel who attacks a weak point, and persuades the credulity of self-love. The misanthropic observer is the more exposed to this danger, as in his eyes the well-known profligacy of a notorious villain is not worse than the continual hypocrisy of a man of principle.

Conduct of Dubois as a Minister.

The conduct of Dubois, as a minister of state, must be viewed in two different aspects. As Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he has been accused of selling the interests of his country to the English, and sacrificing the true policy of France to the private advantage of the Regent. Probably, if his ambition or cupidity would have been gratified by thus betraying the interests of the country he was called to govern,

Dubois would not have hesitated to have done so; but I much doubt whether the effect of his conduct in this respect was so pernicious as it has been supposed. If he had given a helping hand to the Pretender, and assisted the ambitious views of the Queen of Spain in Italy, it is possible he might have dethroned the house of Hanover, and obtained a better sovereignty for the second son of Philip the Fifth; but on the other hand, he would have incurred the risk of provoking George the First to the same animosity which inspired William the Third, and thus involving France in another long war against the whole of Europe. It is easy to perceive how dangerous such a contest would have been to a kingdom which Lewis the Fourteenth had left exhausted of men, embarrassed in finances, and weary of danger. The utmost possible gain would not have been nearly equal to the utmost probable loss.

The worst part of the government of Dubois, is undoubtedly his disregard of all decency and propriety in the internal administration. The abuses of the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth were carried off with such an air of dignity and confidence, that men doubted whether they were evils, and while the people were cheated by appearances, the governors themselves seemed to share the delusion. But Dubois scarcely concealed his contempt for the institutions by which he profited: placed at the head of the church and state, he avowed that he thought religion an imposture, and political integrity a fable. The open profligacy of his life was apparent even to the vulgar;* and his theoretical disbelief in the obliga-

* A footman of the Archbishop of Rheims said one day to a footman of the

tions of moral duty was scarcely less notorious than his practical violation of them. If religion and government were subsequently overthrown in France, Dubois was the first sapper of their foundations; he took advantage of the established authority to promote his own views, careless of what might follow; and the writers of the age seemed almost justified in hating princes and priests, when the Regent and Dubois had given so striking an example of the worthlessness of the court and the clergy. The Regent's own vices indeed might have been set down to the violence of passion overcoming the force of precept; but the cold systematic wickedness of his minister was neither veiled by refinement, nor interrupted by any gleams of returning virtue. The Regent overstept the boundaries of right and wrong; Dubois threw them to the ground.

Behaviour of the Duke of Orleans.

The Duke of Orleans was not sorry for the death of his favourite: a thunder-storm coming on during his last moments, the Duke exclaimed "I think this tempest will carry off my buffoon." As soon as Dubois was dead, he took the place of prime minister, and his first act was to recall the friends and companions whom the jealousy of his minister had exiled. To Nocé he wrote, "Come back, my dear Nocé, nothing shall separate us in future: *morta la bestia morto il veneno.*" When Noailles returned the Regent embraced him cordially, protested that his disgrace was wholly owing to Dubois, and added with a sort of confusion, "Well! what shall we say of him?" The Duke of Noailles replied with

Cardinal Dubois, "Mon maitre est plus grand seigneur que le tien, car il sacre les rois:" to which the other replied, "Quoi! mon maitre sacre tous les jours le bon Dieu; c'est bien plus que les Rois." Mémoires de Madame, p. 252.

equal taste and quickness: "Pax vivis, requies defunctis." The Regent by these speeches only added another very common weakness to that which he had before shewn; the weakness of appearing to despise the man whom he was unable to resist.

Joy of Lewis XV.

Every one was rejoiced at the death of Dubois, but no one more so than the young king. With that extreme susceptibility of impression which belongs to all children, he had taken a strong dislike to the Cardinal, whose coarse familiarity and decided tone of superiority had betrayed an intention of governing him, to which he was by no means willing to submit. The Regent, on the contrary, approached the royal child with the same respect as he would have shewn to Lewis the Fourteenth; conversed with him in a gentle tone; amused him with topics suited to his age; affected always to lay before him the appointments he proposed to make, and always ended every proposal with the reserve, "But you are the master; I am only here to execute your commands." If the King shewed a wish to promote any individual, (which happened but seldom), he skilfully caught his meaning and acceded to his desire. The little monarch was delighted with this appearance of governing the kingdom himself, and in spite of the lessons of Villeroy, acquired an affection for the Regent, who always lived in his memory.

Upon resuming the reins of government, the Duke of Orleans endeavoured to return to habits of business, to which he had been for some time a stranger. He recurred at this time to his favourite idea of paper money, and longed in his heart to try again the system of Law, avoiding the errors into

which he had been formerly led. But his projects and his attention to business soon vanished together; he abandoned the government to the secretaries of state, and sunk altogether into his old habits of debauch. His mornings were clouded with stupor, and his altered looks gave an intimation of apoplexy: his surgeons and his friends remonstrated on the danger to which he exposed himself. He answered with indifference, that vain apprehensions should not deprive him of his pleasures, and that he preferred a sudden death. The symptoms at length became so urgent, that Chirac, his surgeon, pressed him urgently to allow himself to be bled. He replied, that he had too much business on his hands at that time, but that on the Monday following he would give himself up entirely to his physicians, and in the mean time live abstemiously. On that same day however he dined plentifully, contrary to his usual custom. After dinner he was sitting by the fire-side with the Duchess of Phalaris, one of his mistresses, when he suddenly fell lifeless in her arms. She instantly ran out for assistance, but as it was near the hour of the Regent's doing business with the King, none of the attendants were at hand. It was half an hour before a surgeon could be found, and the prince was then quite dead.

Thursday, Dec. 2, 1723.

Death of the Regent.

Duke of Bourbon Prime Minister.

La Vrillière, secretary of state, went immediately to announce the death of the Duke of Orleans to the Duke of Bourbon, whom he advised to ask for the place of prime minister; and to the Bishop of Frejus, to whom he told what he had done. He then caused a patent of prime minister, and the form of oath to be drawn out by his clerks. With these

documents the three went to the King, who cried bitterly when he was told of the death of the Duke of Orleans. Being asked by Fleury if he would have the Duke of Bourbon for his prime minister, he assented by nodding his head. The Duke then stepped forward, thanked the King, and took the oaths. Thus the place of the Duke of Orleans was filled an hour after his decease.

Review of the Regency.

The period known in France by the name of the Regency, may be considered as the immediate source of those disorders of the government which ended in its horrible dissolution. The Duke of Orleans was naturally endowed with the divine virtues of mercy, goodness, humanity, and we may add, a love of freedom and toleration, which were never quite extinguished. But on the other hand, he threw off as needless and impertinent, the solemn obligations of faith, the tacit engagements of constancy to friends, and justice to all; the reverence due to an Almighty God; in short, all the duties which the natural reason of mankind has added to our moral feelings, and which christians have respected as the precepts of revealed religion. It is worth the while then of those who have done likewise, to observe what benefit he obtained by his emancipation. The example is the more valuable, because persons who have adopted the opinions, even with the talents and good qualities of the Duke of Orleans, have seldom had so favourable a situation for professing them. Being opposed to the general sense of society, they have complained that they were pursued by calumnies, and persecuted by hypocrites; they have appealed from the judgment of that world whose laws they had derided, and

whose animosity they had provoked. But the Regent of France was in a condition to dictate manners, as well as rule the state: he led, instead of following society, and met with no serious resistance to his will. The tiresome hypocrisy of the court that had preceded him, was a bounty upon some latitude of morals, and made his course easy. He came into possession of an unlimited power when he was about forty years of age, after having spent his early life as a subject, neither too poor nor too great, endowed with sagacity to penetrate the characters of men, and rich in an experience which gave him a wide knowledge of the world. His mind was singularly happy, collecting with little reading, and retaining with little trouble, information of all kinds; in sciences, in arts, in history, in genealogy. He was, like Charles the Second of England, fond of experiments in chemistry, and had moreover a taste for painting, in which he was both a collector and an artist.* According to the testimony of Maréchal, there were five or six different professions in which, if obliged to work for his bread, he might have made a fortune. He was gifted with a natural eloquence, which never forsook him, enabling him to treat with clearness the most intricate question of finance, and with grace the highest subjects of human speculation. He united, says St. Simon, what few persons do—great quickness, with such solidity of judgment, that he would never have been deceived in any thing if he had followed the first decision of his mind.

* Some tapestry made from his designs represented the story of Daphnis and Chloe: the pictures he collected were sold in England at the beginning of the revolution, and now adorn the houses of the Marquis of Stafford and the Earl of Carlisle

Possessed of these splendid advantages, the Regent manifestly failed in making the nation or himself happy. Instead of endeavouring by wise and detailed regulations to improve the practice, and enlarge the spirit of the administration, he fixed his attention on a showy but delusive scheme. He intoxicated the people with false hopes, and produced a spirit of gambling in the nation, which gave riches to the unscrupulous jobber, and cast ruin upon the simple and unwary. He destroyed at the same time the energies of his own mind; his taste became depraved, and he found every thing insipid but playing at hazard with the property of a nation. He threw the whole business of the kingdom into the hands of a base and profligate flatterer, whom he himself despised, and yet was mean enough to dread. In his private life, having no occupation that interested his heart, finding nothing in mankind or in literature that touched a chord in his bosom, he was perpetually suffering the pains and penalties of idleness.* He was weary from the very want of restraint. He found it difficult, if not impossible to discover, even in his hours of debauch, a means of making pleasure agreeable. He endeavoured to give a zest to his excesses by carrying them to the greatest pitch on Good Friday and other sacred days;† thus taking away all dignity from his infidelity, and showing his weakness at the moment he meant to display his strength. Yet even the liberty of a private rake was at length denied him; his chosen companions were banished for speaking ill of his vile favourite; and his mistress could only hope to remain with him by making him the slave of Dubois.

* On n'a vu jamais personne aussi desœuvré ni aussi livré au néant et à l'ennui que le Duc d'Orleans. St. Simon. † Ib.

Although to all appearance a man the most indifferent to fame, the Regent was not altogether insensible to calumny. He bore some charges indeed, even of the gravest kind, with astonishing calmness. A person of the name of Lagrange Chancel wrote a satire upon him called the Philippics. The Regent prevailed upon the Duke of St. Simon to procure it, and read it to him. He heard the strongest and bitterest accusations, even that of incest, with composure, saying only, from time to time, "What good poetry!" But when he found himself represented as lying in wait to poison the young King, he cried out that it was too horrible, his eyes filled with tears, and he appeared to sink beneath the weight of so cruel a calumny.* The imputation indeed was wholly unmerited. But in justice we must confess, that he who tries to gain a reputation for wickedness, an ambition that is but too common, has no right to complain if the world give him credit for more crimes than he is capable of committing. No one has a privilege to proclaim his utter disregard of half the duties of morality, and then stand upon his character as a security for the performance of the remainder.

He died prematurely, in the 50th year of his age, only eight years after his uncle, a victim to his own intemperance, and left a name disgraced to after times in the whole world, but deserving above all the reprobation of his country, and the curses of his family and his race. His administration may be considered as an experiment, how far vice in a ruler is fitted to answer the ends of government: happily, the result was calamitous both to the Prince who governed, and the people who obeyed.

* St. Simon.

The death of the Duke of Orleans excited the hopes of the great, and exposed the misery of the multitude. The clergy, whether Jesuit or Jansenist, had held him in abhorrence, knowing that he would not yield entirely to the views of either. The Jansenists were enraged at the progress that had been made in favour of the bull Unigenitus; the Jesuits were angry that they had obtained no more. The Parliament was mortified at the blows it had received, and began again to prepare for combat. The army was indignant at the profusion of orders which had been sold by secretaries and by women to all who would buy, and at the economy of the treasury, which left them with a pay insufficient to enable them to struggle through the distress of the times. "The mass of Paris and of the provinces," says St. Simon, "reduced to despair by the cruel operations of the finances, by the incessant schemes of the government to draw the money of the kingdom to themselves, which made all property uncertain; and by the excessive dearness of all things, as well of luxury as of necessity, had long sighed for relief and deliverance, which the excess of misery and desire made appear as certain, as it was in fact imaginary. Indeed, there was no person of solid property who was not vexed and alarmed at the tricks of state, or who was not in despair at seeing his patrimony melt away in his hands, notwithstanding any prudence he might use, and himself deprived of the means of sustaining his family, without any remedy in the laws, or any protection for his just claim."* Reflections.

On reading this picture of the state of the country at the

* St. Simon.

death of the Regent, drawn by the hand of a man who seems to have been attached to him, we are tempted to ask how it happened, that a brave and spirited nation did not take advantage of this period, to demand a more honest stewardship of their affairs. It seems extraordinary that after the death of the Duke of Orleans, the people should have permitted absolute power to pass so quietly into the hands of the Duke of Bourbon. So many vices, and so much negligence in their rulers, would have taught a people that were wise, to ask for a better form of government. Indeed, I own my wonder is not that resistance came at length, but that it was so long delayed. Every circumstance which occurred at the period of which we are treating, shews the strength of that prevalent passion in all monarchies—admiration for the Prince, and unbounded confidence in his wisdom and integrity. Thus, when in the latter years of Lewis the Fourteenth, the people were reluctantly compelled to renounce their blind zeal for a monarch who no longer made them glorious abroad, or happy at home, they fixed their hopes on the Duke of Burgundy. When that Prince was buried, an immense crowd of the poor assembled to accompany the hearse, mixing tears with rage, and calling out against the Duke of Orleans as the poisoner of his relations. Not long afterwards the Duke of Orleans himself was popular, and his name was celebrated in the songs of the people as Philippe le Debonnaire. But the popularity of Lewis the Fifteenth, whilst yet an infant, exceeded all bounds. Upon his recovery from a dangerous illness in 1721, the people assembled day after day at the Thuilleries to testify their joy, and for two months banquets were made

by private families in the streets to show their delight at the recovery of the King. The same anxiety and the same joy prevailed a very few years afterwards when he was again dangerously ill, and the sympathy shown by the people obtained for Lewis the surname of the Beloved. By such ardent demonstrations did the nation testify their hopes in the Princes of the House of Bourbon. Was it wonderful that, after a century of patience, they were at length roused to indignation at finding all their hopes had been disappointed, and all their confidence misplaced?

The dissoluteness which prevailed during the Regency among the higher ranks, was perhaps never exceeded. It somewhat resembled certainly, although it far surpassed, the licentiousness of the age of Charles the Second in England. Both followed immediately a period of great religious severity, and both found some excuse in condemning the hypocrisy by which that severity had been accompanied; but there is this essential difference between the two—the courtiers of Charles the Second replaced the saintly followers of Cromwell—the debauched nobility of the Regency were the same persons with the pious attendants on the devotions of Lewis the Fourteenth.

Miscellaneous Occurrences.

During the Regency games of hazard were forbidden by royal authority. The Duke of Tresmes pretended to the privilege of having them in his house, as governor of Paris. The lieutenant of police, Machault, said that if this was allowed, he would tolerate every gaming house in Paris: the Regent, with his usual facility, gave the Duke of Tresmes 2000 livres of pension to desist from his pretension. Some

time afterwards the Princess of Carignan, who affected devotion, obtained permission to have a gaming table in her house. The Duke of Tresmes, without resigning his pension, immediately resumed his privilege. But it being found that these places were the fruitful causes of ruin, suicide, and assassination, Cardinal Fleury ordered them to be shut up.* It is the disgraceful practice of the government of France of the present day to derive a revenue from a vice which it tolerates, and therefore promotes: the folly of such conduct is no less than its wickedness; for the unsuccessful gambler might often be a prosperous and useful citizen, did not this accursed vice lead him from his path; while on the other hand, the man who gains his fortune at the gaming table, is almost always a stranger to honest industry and productive occupation.

License of the Press.

During the Regency first began the flood of books of all kinds, attacking, some with argument and some with ridicule, the established religion, government, and morals. To remedy this abuse, the Regent renewed an ancient order, forbidding all printers and booksellers to print and publish any book without permission of the Keeper of the Seals, and any pamphlets or loose sheets without permission of the judge of police of the district, and the approbation of censors appointed for that purpose.† Thus did the Regent attempt to stifle that license of discussion which his conduct had provoked. But as the quantity of water which puts out a small fire only adds fuel to a large one, so difficulties and prohibitions, which often extinguish a sect, add new vigour

* Duclos, t. ii. p. 3. † Vie de P. d'Orleans, ii. 341.

to the progress of a nation. The classes which had been enriched under Lewis the Fourteenth now began to exercise their minds, and surveyed their rulers with the eyes of men uninslaved by prejudice, and prepared to value every thing according to its worth.

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